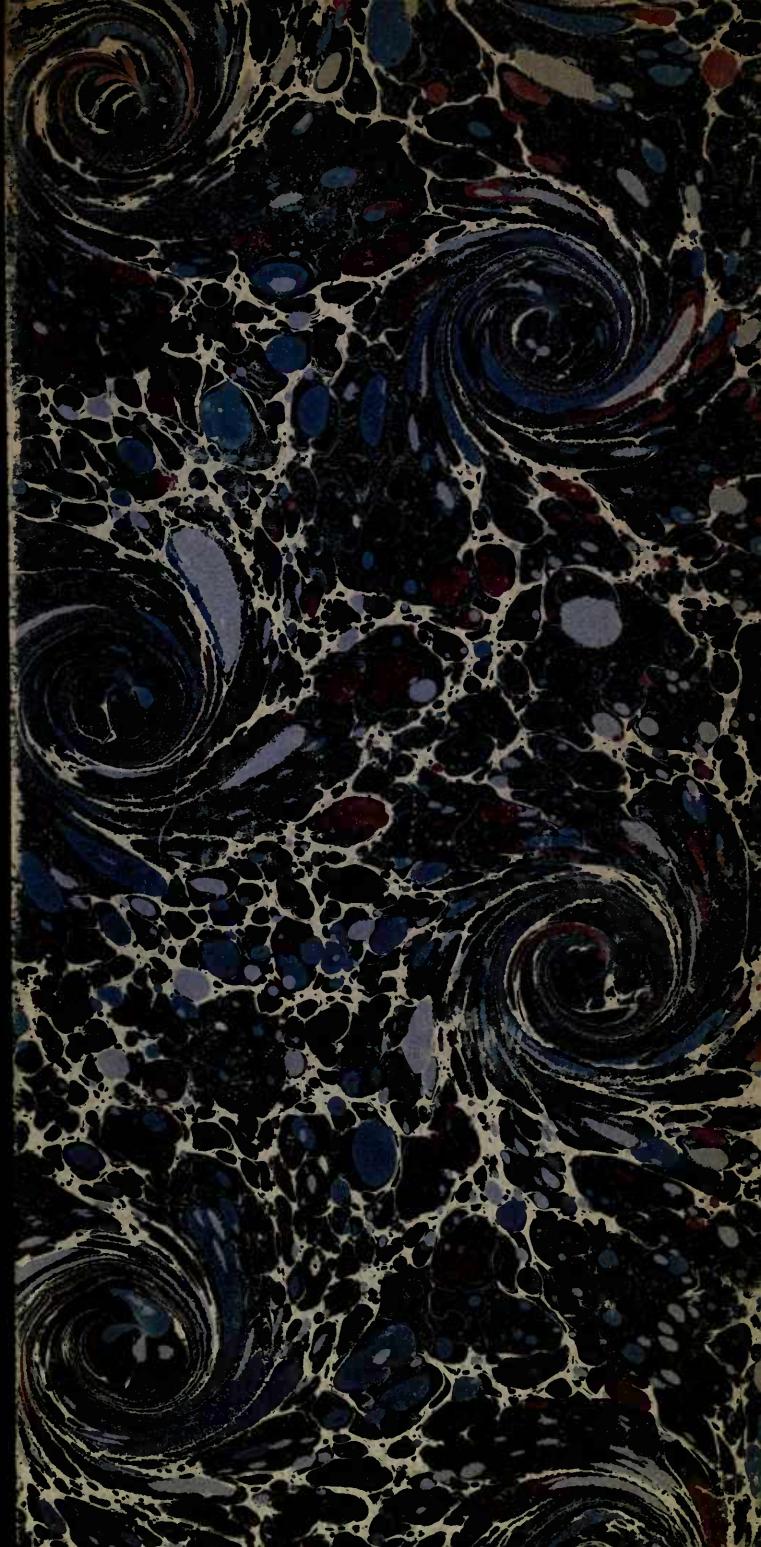


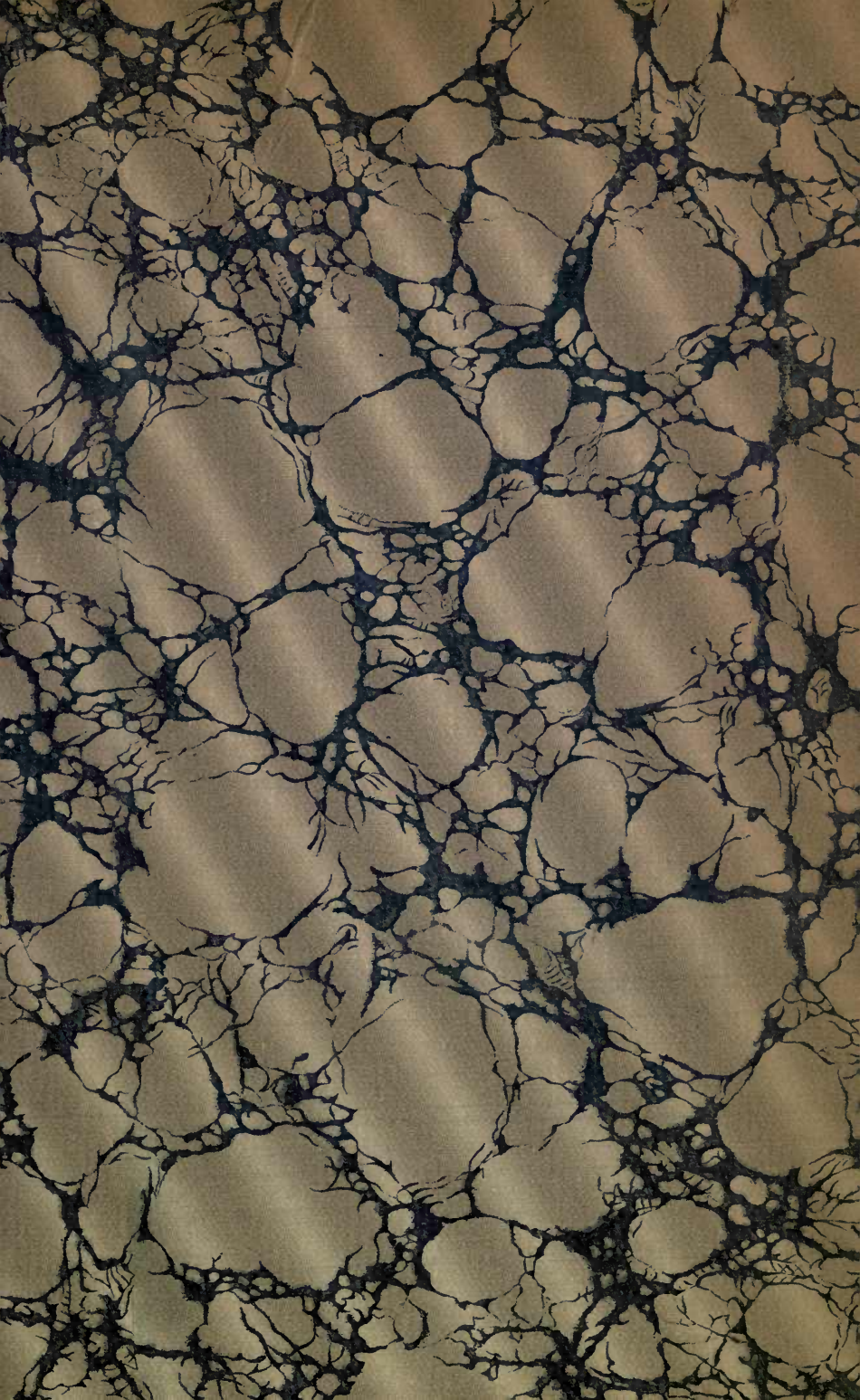
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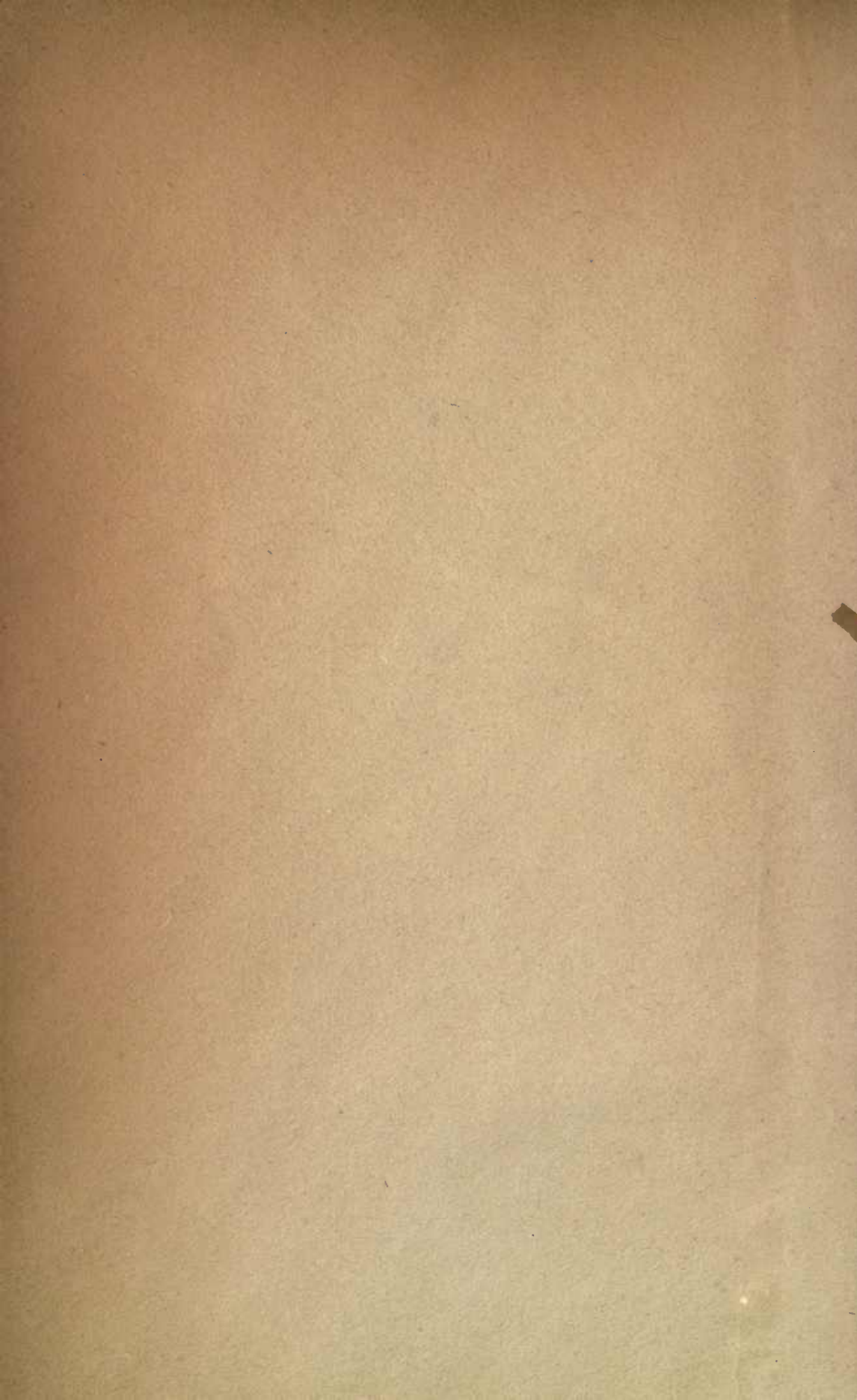




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# Launfal,

AN ANCIENT METRICAL ROMANCE.

BY

THOMAS CHESTRE;

TO WHICH IS APPENDED THE STILL OLDER ROMANCE OF

Lybeaus Disconus.

EDITED BY

JOSEPH RITSON.



EDINBURGH :  
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## LAUNFAL.

BY THOMAS CHESTRE.

THE only ancient copy of this excellent romance, known to be now extant, is contained in a manuscript of the Cotton-library, (Caligula A. II.) written, it would seem, in or about the reign of Henry VI. in which the translator is, by Tanner, who, most absurdly, styles him "*unus regis Arthuri equitum rotundæ tabulæ*," supposed to have lived. Two copies are preserved, in our own libraries, of the French original, by Marie de France, a Norman poetess of the thirteenth century; one in the Harleian MS. Num. 978, and the other in the Cotton, Vespasian B. XIV. The latter begins,

*"L'aventure de un lay;"*

the former (being a collection of such pieces)

*"L'aventure dun autre lai."*

The English poem, which, by the way, is much enlarged, containing a surplus of near three hundred lines, appears to have been printed under the name of "Sir Lambwell;" being licensed, in the register of the Stationers-Company, to John Kynge,\* in 1558, and expressly mentioned in Laneham's "Letter, wherein part of the entertainment unto the queenz majesty at Killingworth castl, 1575, iz signified."

M. Le Grand has given the extract of a *Lai de Gruëlan*, of which, he observes, the subject is precisely the same with that of *Lanval*; though the details are altogether different. See *Fabliaux, ou contes*, A, 92.

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\* He dwelt in Creed Lane, and kept a shop at the sign of the Swan in St. Paul's Churchyard. He probably died in 1561.—JOHNSON'S *TYPOGRAPHIA*, vol. i., p. 557.

## LAUNFAL.

### PART I.

BE doughty Artours dawes,\*  
That held Engelond yn good lawes,  
Ther fell a wondyr cas,  
Of a ley that was ysette,†  
That hyght Launval, and hatte yette ;‡  
Now herkeneth how hyt was.  
Doughty Artour som whyle  
Sojournede yn Kardeuyle,§  
Wyth joye and greet solas ;

---

\* Dr Percy, by mistake, gives it (from Ames ?)

“*Le douzty Artours dawes ;*”

and says that it is in his folio MS. p. 60, beginning thus—

“Doughty in King Arthures dayes.”

† A lay (supposed to come from the barbarous Latin *leudus*, which occurs in the epistle of Fortunatus to Gregory of Tours—

“*Barbaros leudos harpa relidebat,*”)

was what is now called a song or ballad, but generally of the elegiac kind, tender and pathetic (in French *lai*, in German *lied*, in Saxon *leod*), which was usually sung to the harp ; and of which many instances may be found in the prose *Roman de Tristan*, 1488, and elsewhere. See more of these ancient British lays in a note to Emaré.

‡ Thus Mary—

“*Laventure dun autre lai*

*Cum ele avient vus cunterai,*

*Fait fu dun mut gentil vassal*

*En Bretans lapelent Lanval.”*

§ Thus in the MS. and Mr Ellis's edition ; but read, as afterward, Kardevyle. It is Carlisle in Cumberland, where King Arthur is fabled to have had a palace and occasional residence. “On this ryver,” says Froisart, mistaking the Tyne for the Esk, “standeth the towne and castell of Carlyel, the whiche some tyme was kyng Arthurs, and helde his courte there often-tymes.” (English translation, 1525, fo. vii, b.) Thus, also, in an ancient Scottish romance, furtively printed by Pinkerton :—

“In the tyme of Arthur an aunter bytydde,

By the Turne-Wathelan, as the boke telles,

When he to Carlele was comen and conquerour kydde,” &c.

Two old ballads, upon the subject of King Arthur, printed in the “Reliques of ancient



And knyghtes that wer profitable, 10  
 With Artour of the rounde table,  
 Never noon better ther nas.  
 Sere Persevall,\* and syr Gawayn,  
 Syr Gyheryes, and syr Agrafrayn, †  
 And Launcelot ‡ Dulake,  
 Syr Kay, and syr Ewayn,  
 That well couthe fyghte yn plain,  
 Bateles for to take.

English Poetry." suppose his residence at *Carleile*; and one of them, in particular, says,

"At Tearne-Wadling, his castle stands."

"Tearne-Wadling," according to the ingenious editor (and which, as he observes, is evidently the Turne-Wathelan of the Scottish poem), "is the name of a small lake near Hesketh, in Cumberland, on the road from Penrith to Carlisle. There is a tradition," he adds, "that an old castle once stood near the lake, the remains of which were not long since visible:" Tearn, in the dialect of that country, signifying a small lake, and being still in use. The tradition is that either the castle or a great city, was swallowed up by the lake, and may be still seen, under favorable circumstances, at its bottom.

It is *Kardoel* in the original, and elsewhere *Cardueil*. The old romance of *Merlin* calls it "*la ville de Cardueil en Galles*."

\* Sir Perceval le Galois, or Percival de Gales, was one of the knights of the round table. His adventures form the subject of a French metrical romance, composed, in the twelfth century, by Chrestien de Troyes, or, according to others, by a certain Manecier, Mennesier, or Menessier, and of an English one, in the fifteenth, by Robert de Thornton. The former, extant in the national library of France, and in that of Berne, is said to contain no less than 60,000 verses; a number, however, which has been reduced by others to 20,000, and even to 8,700 and 4,500. It appeared in prose at Paris, 1530, 8vo. The latter is in the library of Lincoln Cathedral.

† Gaheris (*Gueherries*, or *Gueresches*), and Agravaine, surnamed *le orgueilleux*, were brothers to Sir Gawain, and both knights of the round table.

‡ This hero was the son of Ban, king of Benock, in the marches of Gaul and Little-Britain, and a knight-companion of the round table. He is equally remarkable for his gallantry and good fortune; being never overcome, in either joust or tournament, unless by enchantment or treachery; and being in high favour with the queen, whom he loved with singular fidelity to the last; doing for her many magnanimous deeds of arms, and actually saving her from the fire through his noble chivalry. This connection involved him in a long and cruel war with King Arthur; after whose death he became a hermit. His adventures, which take up a considerable portion of *Mort d'Arthur*, are the subject of a very old French romance, in three folio volumes, beside a number of MSS.

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Kyng Ban-Booght, and kyng Bos,\*  
 Of ham ther was a greet los, 20  
 Men sawe tho no wher her make ;  
 Syr Galafre,† and syr Launfale,  
 Wherof a noble tale  
 Among us schall awake.  
 With Artour ther was a bacheler,  
 And hadde ybe well many a yer,  
 Launfal for soth he hyght,  
 He gaf gyftys largelyche,  
 Gold, and sylver, and clodes ryche,  
 To squyer and to knyght. 30  
 For hys largesse and hys bountè,  
 The kynges stuward made was he,  
 Ten yer, y you plyght ;  
 Of alle the knyghtes of the table rounde  
 So large ther was noon yfounde,  
 Be dayes ne be nyght,  
 So hyt be fyll, yn the tenthe yer,  
 Marlyn was Artours counsalere,‡  
 He radde hym for to wende

\* *Ban* was king of *Benoic*, and *Boort* (not *Boozt*) king of *Gannes*. They were brothers, and both knights of the rounnd table. *Ban* was the father of sir Lancelot. *Boort* in *Mort d'Arthur* is called *Bors*. There is no king *Bos*: nor, in fact, do any of these names occur in the French original. There was, indeed, another *Boort*, or *Bors*, afterwards king of *Benoic*; but the translator has evidently missupposed *Ban-Boozt* to be the name of one king, and *Bos* that of the other. A "*roman des rois Bans and Beors freres germains*." fo. is among the MSS. of the French national library. (*Bib. du roi*, 7184).

† No such name occurs among the knights of the round table, or is to be met with in any old romance. It is, probably, a corruption of *Galehaut*, *Galahalt*, or *Galahad*, of whom mention is made in *Mort d'Arthur*.

‡ Merlin, a powerful magician, was begotten by a devil, or incubus, upon a young damsel of great beauty, and daughter, as Geoffrey of Monmouth asserts, to the king of Demetia. He removed, by a wonderful machine of his own invention, the giants-dance, now Stone-henge, from Ireland, to Salisbury-plain, where part of it is still standing; and, in order to enable Uther Pendragon, king of Britain, to enjoy Igera, the wife of Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, transformed him, by magical art, into the likeness of her husband; which amorous connection, (Igera being rendered an honest woman by the murder of her spouse, and timely intermarriage with king Uther,) enlightened the world, like another Alcmena, with a second Hercules, *videlicet*, the illustrious Arthur. This famous prophet, being violently enamoured of a fairy damsel, in the march of Little-Britain, named *Airvienne*, or *Viviane*, alias *The Lady or Damsel of the lake*, taught her so many of his magic secrets, that,



To king Ryon of Irlond ryght,\* 40  
 And sette him ther a lady bryght,  
 Gwennere hys doughtyr hende.  
 So he dede, and home her brought,  
 But syr Launfal lyked her noght,  
 Ne other knyghtes that wer hende;  
 For the lady bar los of swych word,  
 That sche hadde lemannys unther her lord,  
 So fele ther nas noon ende.

They wer ywedded, as y you say,  
 Upon a Wytsonday, 50  
 Before princes of moch pryde,  
 No man ne may telle yn tale  
 What tolk ther was at that bredale,  
 Of countreys fer and wyde.  
 No nother man was yn halle ysette,  
 But he wer prelat, other baronette, †  
 In herte ys naght to hyde,

once upon a time, she left him asleep in a cave within the perilous forest of *Darnantes*, on the borders of the sea of Cornwall, and the sea of *Soreloys*, where, if the credible inhabitants of those countries may be believed, he still remains in that condition; the place of his repose being effectually sealed by force of grand conjurations, and having himself been never seen by any man, who could give intelligence of it; even that courteous knight Sir Gawin, who, after his enchantment, had some conversation with him, not being permitted the gratification of a single look. (See *Lancelot du lac*, fo. 6.) Her enchantments, however, are related with some difference, and more particularity, in the romance of her venerable gallant, or, rather, unfortunate dupe,  *tome 2*, fo. 127, whereby it appears that, after being enchanted by his mistress, as aforesaid he found himself, when he awoke, in the strongest tower in the world, to wit, in the forest of *Broceliande*, whence he was never able to depart, although she continued to visit him both by day and night at her pleasure. The divine Ariosto, by poetical licence, has placed the tomb of this magician in some part of France; and our admirable Spenser, after an old tradition, in Wales, which, in fact, seems to have had the best title to him. His prophecies, which were first published in *The British History*, have since gone through repeated editions, in Latin, French, and English.

\* This king *Ryon*, or *Ryence*, was also king of North Wales, and of many isles. He sent to King Arthur, for his beard, to enable him, with those of eleven other kings, whom he had already discomfited, to purfle his mantle. See *Mort d'Arthur*, B. 1. C. 24. According, however, to Geoffrey of Moumouth, this insulting message proceeded from the giant *Ritho*, whom Arthur slew upon the mountain *Aravius*. Ryon was afterwards brought prisoner to Arthur (C. 34); and is named among the knights of the round-table. The author is singular in making Guenever his daughter.

† There was no *baronet*, properly so called, before the reign of James the first. The word, at the same time, is by no means singular in ancient historians; but whether a diminutive of *baron*, or a corruption of *banneret*, is uncertain.

Yf they fatte noght alle ylyche,\*  
 Har servyse was good and ryche,  
 Certeyn yn ech a syde. 60

And whan the lordes hadde etc yn the halle,  
 And the clothes wer drawen alle,  
 As ye mowe her and lythe,  
 The botelers fentyn wyn,  
 To alle the lords that wer theryn,  
 With chere both glad and blythe.  
 The quene yaf gyftes for the nones,  
 Gold and selver, precyous stonys,  
 Her curtasye to kythe,  
 Everych knyght sche yaf broche, other ryng, 70  
 But syr Launfal sche yaf no thyng,  
 That grevede hym many a sythe.

And whan the bredale was at ende  
 Launfal tok his leve to wende  
 At Artour the kyng,  
 And seyde a lettere was to hym come,  
 That deth hadde hys fadyr ynome,  
 He most to his berynge.  
 Tho seyde king Artour, that was hende,  
 Launfal, if thou wylt fro me wende, 80  
 Tak with the greet spendyng,  
 And my suster sones two,  
 Bothe they schull with the go,  
 At hom the for to bryng.

Launfal tok leve, withoute fable,  
 With knyghtes of the rounde table,  
 And wente forth yn his journè,  
 Tyl he come to Karlyoun,†  
 To the meyrys hous of the toune,  
 Hys servaunt that hadde ybe. 90

\* The original reading is "ylyke."

† Caerleon (the *Urbs Legionum* of Geoffrey), formerly in Glamorganshire, but now in Monmouthshire, upon the river Usk, near the Severn-sea. The district, in which this city stood, was called *Gwent*, of which Arthur is said to have been king. See Carte. *Caerlegion*, or *Caer Lleon* (*Civitas Legionum*), is, likewise, the ancient name of Chester upon Dee. There is nothing of this in the original.



The meyr stod, as ye may here,  
 And saw hym come ride up anblere,  
     With two knyghtes and other maynè,  
 Agayns hym he hath wey ynome,  
 And seyde, Syr, thou art well come,  
     How faryth our kyng? tel me.

Launfal answerede and seyde than,  
 He faryth as well as any man,  
     And elles greet ruthe hyt wore ;  
 But, syr meyr, without lesyng, 100  
 I am thepartyth fram the kyng,  
     And that rewyth me sore :  
 Ne ther thar noman benethe ne above,  
 For the kyng Artours love,  
     Onowre me never more ;  
 But, syr meyr, y pray the pur amour,  
 May y take with the sojour ?  
     Som tyme we knewe us yore.

The meyr stod, and bethogte hym there,  
 What myght be hys answer, 110  
     And to hym than gan he sayn,  
 Syr, seven knyghtes han her har in ynome,  
 And ever y wayte whan they wyl come,  
     They arn of Lytyll-Bretayne.\*  
 Launfal turnede hymself and lowgh,  
 Therof he hadde scorn inowgh,  
     And seyde to his knyghtes tweyne,  
 Now may ye se swych ys service,  
 Unther a lord of lytyll pryse,  
     How he may therof be fayn. 120

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\* Little-Britain, or Britany, called, by the French, *Basse-Bretagne*, and, by the ancients, *Armorica*, on the coast of France, opposite to Great Britain, where certain refugee Britons are said to have fled, and established a settlement, on the success of the Saxons, in or about the year 513. See Vertot's *Critical history*, &c. I, 103. Bede, however, by some strange mistake, supposes the Southern Britons to have proceeded from *Armorica*. There was a succession of British kings in this little territory, who are famous in the old French annals. These British emigrants seem to have been chiefly Cornish, not only from their having given the name of *Cornwall* to a part of their new acquisition, where they, likewise, had, as in their old possessions, a *Mount St. Michael*, but from the affinity of the two dialects, one of which is extant in its literary remains, and the other is still spoken.

Launfal awayward gan to ryde,  
 The meyr bad he schuld abyde,  
 And seyde yn thys manere,  
 Syr, yn a chamber by my orchard-syde,  
 Ther may ye dwell with joye and pryde,  
 Yf hyt your wyll were.  
 Launfal anoon ryghtes,  
 He and hys two knytes,  
 Sojournede ther yn fere,  
 So savagelych hys good he besette,  
 That he ward yn greet dette,  
 Ryght yn the ferst yere.

130

So hyt befell at Pentecost,  
 Swych tyme as the holy gost  
 Among mankend gan lyght,  
 That syr Hugh and syr Jon,  
 Tok her leve for to gon  
 At syr Launfal the knyght.  
 They seyde, Syr, our robes beth to-rent  
 And your tresour\* ys all yspent,  
 And we goth ewyll ydyght.  
 Thanne seyde syr Launfal to the knyghtes fre,  
 Tell yd no man of my povertè,  
 For the love of god almyght.

140

The knyghtes answerede and seyde tho,  
 That they nolde him wreye never mo,  
 All thys world to wyne.  
 With that word they† wente hym fro.  
 To Glastyngbery bothe two,  
 Ther kyng Artour was inne.  
 The kyng sawe the knyghtes hende,  
 And ayens ham he gan wende,  
 For they wer of his kenne ; ‡  
 Noon other robes they ne hadde  
 Than they out with ham ladde,  
 And tho wete to-tore and thynne.

150

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\* The original reads : "tofour."

† The original reads : "the."

‡ Kin(?)



Than seyde quene Gwenore, that was fel  
How faryth the proud knight Launfal ?

May he hys armes welde ?

Ye, madame, sayde the knytes than,

160

He faryth as well as any man,

And ellys god hyt schelde.

Moche worchyp and greet honour,

To Gonore the quene and King Artour,

Of syr Launfal they telde ;

And seyde, He lovede us so,

That he would us evermo,

At wyll have yhelde.

But upon a rayny day hyt befel,

An huntynge wente syr Launfel,

170

To chasy yn holtes hore,

In our old robes we yede that day,

And thus we beth ywent away,

As we before hym wore.

Glad was Artour the kyng,

That Launfal was yn good lyking,

The quene hyt rew well sore ;

For sche wold, with all her myght,

That he hadde be, bothe day and nyght,

In paynys mor and more.

180

Upon a day of the trinitè,

A feste of greet solempnitè

In Carlyoun was holde,

Erles and barones of that countrè.

Ladyes and borjaes \* of that citè,

Thyder come bothe yongh and old.

But Launfal for hys povertè

Was not bode to that semblè,

Lyte men of hym tolde ;

The meyr to the feste was of sent,

190

The merys doughter to Launfal went,

And axede yf he wolde

In halle dyne with her that day.

Damesele, he sayde, nay,

To dyne have i no herte ;

\* Fr. Bourgeois.



Thre dayes ther ben agon  
 Mete ne drynke eet y noon,  
 And all was for povert.  
 To-day to cherche y wold have gon,  
 But me fawtede \* hosyn and schon, 200  
 Clenly brech and scherte ;  
 And for defawte of clodynge,  
 Ne myghte y yn with the peple thrynge,  
 No wonther dough me smerte

But othyng, damesele, y pray the,  
 Sadel and brydel lene thou me,  
 A whyle for to ryde,  
 That y myghte comfortede be.  
 By a launde unther thys cyte,  
 Al yn thys undern-tyde. 210  
 Launfal dyghte hys courser,  
 Without knave other squyer,  
 He rood with lytyll pryde ;  
 Hys hors slod, and fel yn the fen,  
 Wherfore hym scornede many men,  
 Abowte hym fer and wyde.

Poverly the knyght to hors gan sprynge,  
 For to dryve away lokinge,  
 He rood toward the west ;  
 The wether was hot the undern-tyde,  
 He lyghte adoun, and gan abyde, 220  
 Under a fayr forest :  
 And for hete to the wedere,  
 Hys mantell he feld togydere,  
 And sette hym down to reste ;  
 Thus sat the knyght yn symplyte,  
 In the schadowe unther a tre,  
 Ther that hym lykede best.

As he sat yn sorrow and sore,  
 He sawe come out of holtes hore 230  
 Gentyll maydenes two,  
 Har kertoles wer of Inde sandel,  
 Ilased smalle, jolyf and well,  
 Ther myght noon gayer go.

Har manteles wer of grene felwet,  
 Ybordured with gold, right well ysette  
     Ipelvred with grys and gro ;  
 Har heddys wer dyght well withalle,  
 Everych hadde oon a jolyf coronall,  
     Wyth syxty gemmys and mo.

240

Har faces wer whyt as snow on downe,  
 Har rode was red, her cyn wor browne,  
     I sawe never non swyche ;  
 That oon bar of gold a basyn,  
 That other a towayle whyt and fyn,  
     Of selk that was good and ryche.  
 Her kercheves wer well schyre,  
 Arayd wyth ryche gold wyre,  
     Launfal began to syche ;  
 They com to hym over the hoth,  
 He was curteys, aud ayens hem goth,  
     And greette hem myldelyche.

250

Damesels, he seyde, god yow se !  
 Syr knyght, they seyde, well the be !  
     Our lady, dame Tryamour,  
 Bad thou schuldest com speke with here,  
 Gyf hyt wer thy wyllle, sere,  
     Wythoute more sojour.  
 Launfal hem grauntede curteyslyche,  
 And wente wyth hem myldelyche,  
     They wheryn whyt as flour ;  
 And when they come in the forest an hygh,  
 A pavyloun yteld he sygh,  
     With merthe and mochell honour.

260

The pavyloun was wrouth for sothe, y wys,  
 All of werk of Sarsynys,  
     The pomelles of crystall ;  
 Upon the toppe an ern ther stod  
 Of bournede gold ryche and good,  
     Ifloresched with ryche amall.  
 Hys cyn wer carbonkeles bryght,  
 As the mone they schon\* a-nyght,  
     That spreteth out ovyr all ;

270

---

\* The original reads : "theschon."

Alysaundre the conquerour,  
Ne kyng Artour, yn hys most honour,  
Ne hadde noon scwych juell.

He fond yn the pavyloun  
The kynges doughter of Olyroun,\*

Dame Tryamour,† that hyghte,  
Her fadyr was kyng of fayrye, ‡ 280  
Of occient fer and nyghe,  
A man of mochell myghte.

In the pavyloun he fond a bed of prys,  
Iheled with purpur bys,

That semylé was of syghte,  
Therinne lay that lady gent,  
That after syr Launfal hedde ysent,  
That lefsome lemede bryght.

For hete her clothes down she dede,  
Almost to her gerdyl stede, 290

Than lay sche uncovert ;  
Sche was as whyt as lylle yn May,  
Or snow that sneweth yn wynterys day,  
He seygh never non so pert .

The rede rose, whan she ys newe,  
Ayens her rode nes naught of hewe,  
I dar well say yn sert!

Her here schon as gold wyre,  
May no man rede here atyre,  
Ne naught well thenke yn hert. 300

\* Oleron is an isle of France, on the coast of Aunis, and of Saintonge. It was known to the ancients under the name of *Uliarus*, as appears from Pliny. Sidonius Appollinaris calls it *Olario*. The maritime laws of France and England hence received the appellation they still retain of *La ley Olyron*; and here it was that King Richard the first stopped, in his return from the Holy Land, to correct them. In 1047 it belonged to Geoffrey de Martel, earl of Anjou, and Agnes his wife. See Martiniere, and Cokes, 4th institute, 144.

† This lady's name is not mentioned in the original. *Tryamour*, at the same time, is, elsewhere, that of a knight, and the subject of a metrical romance, certainly from the French.

‡ The following description of a female fay, or fairy, is given in the romance of *Lancelot du lac*, Paris, 1533, fo. C. 8.

"*La damoiselle qui Lancelot porta au lac estoit une fée, et en celluy temps estoient appellees faées toutes celles qui sentremettoient d'enchantements et de charmes. . . et scarvoient la force et la vertu des parolles, des pierres, et des herbes, parquoy elles estoient tenue en jeunesse et en*



Sche seyde, Launfal my lemman swete,  
 Al my joye for the y lete,  
     Swetyng paramour,  
 Ther nys no man yn Cristentè,  
 That y love so moche as the,  
     Kyng, neyther emperour.  
 Launfal beheld that swete wyghth,  
 All hys love yn her was lyghth,  
 And keste that swete flour ;  
     And sat adoun her besyde,  
 And seyde, Swetyng, what so betyde,  
     I am to thyn honour.

She seyde, Syr knyght, gentyl and hende,  
 I wot thy stat, ord, and ende,  
     Be naught aschamed of me ;  
 Yf thou wylt truly to me take,  
 And alle wemen for me forsake,  
     Ryche i wyll make the.  
 I wyll the yeve an alner,  
 Imad of sylk and of gold cler,  
     Wyth fayre ymages thre ;  
 As oft thou putttest the hond therinne,  
 A mark of gold thou schalt wynne,  
     In wat place that thou be.

320

Also, sche seyde, syr Launfal,  
 I yeve the Blaunchard my stede lel,

---

*beauté, et en grandes richesses comment elles devoient.*" These fairies, not unfrequent in the old romances, united the ideas of power and beauty ; and it is to such a character that Shakspeare alludes, where he makes Anthony to say of CLEOPATRA,

"To this GREAT FAIRY I'll commend thy acts."

Milton, too, appears to have had an accurate notion upon this subject :

"Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades,  
 And ladies of th' Hesperides, that seem'd,  
 Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabl'd since  
 Of fairy damsels met in forest wide  
 By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,  
 Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore."

It is perfect ignorance to confound the fairies of romance either with the pigmy race of that denomination, of whom the same great poet has given a beautiful and correct description, or with the fanciful creation of Spencer.

And Gyfre my owen knave ; \*  
 And of my armes oo pensel,  
 Wyth thre ermyns ypented well, 330  
 Also thou schalt have.  
 In werre, ne yn turnement,  
 Ne schall the greve no knyghtes dent,  
 So well y schall the save.  
 Than answerede the gentyl knyght,  
 And seyde, Gramarcy, my swete wyght,  
 No bettere kepte y have.

The damesell gan her up sette,  
 And bad her maydenes her fette,  
 To hyr hondys watyr clere ; 340  
 Hyt was ydo without lette,  
 The cloth was spred, the bord was sette,  
 They wente to have sopere.  
 Mete and drynk they hadde afyn,  
 Pyement, clare and Reynysch wyn,  
 And elles greet wondyr hyt wer ;  
 Whan they had sowpeth, and the day was gon,  
 They wente to bedde, and that anoon,  
 Launfal and sche yn fere.

For play lytyll they sclepte that nyght, 350  
 Tyll on morn hyt was day-lyght,  
 She badd hym aryse anoon ;  
 Hy seyde to hym, Syr gentyl knyght,  
 And thou wilt speke with me any wyght,  
 To a derne stede thou gon.  
 Well privyly i woll come to the,  
 No man alyve ne schall me se,  
 As styлле as any ston.  
 Tho was Launfal glad and blythe,  
 He cowde no man hys joye kythe, 360  
 And keste her well good won.

---

\* No such names occur in the original. Giflet (or Girflet) *le filz* Mu (*alias* Do) is a character in the o'd French romance of *Lancelot du lac*.

But of othyng, syr knyght, i warne the,  
That thou make no bost of me,

For no kennes mede ;  
And yf thou doost, y warny the before,  
All my love thou hast forlore :

And thus to hym sche seyde.  
Launfal tok hys leve to wende,  
Gyfre kedde that he was hende,  
And brought Launfal hys stede ;

370

Launfal lepte ynto the arsoun,  
And rood hom to Karlyoun,  
In hys pover wede.

Tho was the knyght yn herte at wylle,  
In his chaunber he hyld him styлле,

All that undern-tyde ;  
Than come ther thorwgh the cyté ten  
Well yharneysyth men

Upon ten somers ryde.  
Some wyth sylver, some wyth gold,  
All to syr Launfal hyt schold,

380

To presente hym wyth pryde ;  
Wyth ryche clothes and armure bryght,  
They axede aftyr Launfal the knyght,  
Whar he gan abyde.

The yong men wer clodeth yn Ynde,  
Gyfre he rood all behynde,  
Up Blaunchard whyt as flour ;  
Tho seyde a boy, that yn the market stod,  
How fer schall all thys good ?

390

Tell us pur amour.  
Tho seyde Gyfre, Hyt ys ysent  
To syr Launfal yn present,  
That hath leved yn greet dolour.  
Than seyde the boy, Nys he but a wrecche ?  
What thar any man of hym recche ?\*

At the meyrys hous he taketh-sojour.

---

\* Mr. Ellis, who published this romance, for the first time at the end of the second volume of "the *fabliaux* or tales" of his deceased friend, G. L. Way, Esq., has strangely misconceived this simple passage ; supposing *AWRECHE*, as it is



At the merys hous they gon alyghte,  
 And presented the noble knyghte  
 Wyth swych good as hym was sent ;  
 And whan the meyr seygh that rychesse,  
 And syr Launfales noblenesse,  
 He held hym self foule yschent.  
 Tho seyde the meyr, Syr, pur charyte,  
 In halle to day that thou wylt ete with me,  
 Yesterday y hadde yment  
 At the feste we wolde han be yn same,  
 And y hadde solas and game,  
 And erst thou were ywent.

“Syr meyr, god foryelde the, 410  
 Whyles y was yn my poverté,  
 Thou bede me never dyne :  
 Now y have more gold and fe,  
 That myne frendes han sent me,  
 Than thou and alle dync.”  
 The meyr for schame away yede,  
 Launfal yn purpure gan hym schrede,  
 Ipelvred with whyt ermyne ;  
 All that Launfal had borwyth before  
 Gyfre, be taylor and be score, 420  
 Yald hyt well and fynce.

Launfal helde ryche festes,  
 Fyfty fedde povere gestes,  
 That in myscaef wer ;  
 Fyfty boughte stronge stedes,  
 Fyfty yaf ryche wedes,  
 To knyghtes and squyere,  
 Fyfty rewardede relygyons.  
 Fyfty delyverede povere prysouns,  
 And made ham quyt and schere : 430  
 Fyfty clodede gestours,  
 To many men he dede honours,  
 In countreys fer and nere.

---

there printed to be one word, and the meaning, “He is not without his REVENGE (*i.e.*, COMPENSATION) whatever any man may think of him.” The boy, however, manifestly intends our seedy knight no compliment in the question he asks—“Is he aught,” says he, “but a wretch (or beggarly rascal?) What does anyone care for him?”

Alle the lordes of Karlyoun  
Lette crye a turnement yn the toun,  
For love of syr Launfel,  
And for Blaunchard, hys good stede,  
To wyte how hym wold spede,  
That was ymade so well.  
And whan the day was ycome, 440  
That the justes were yn ynome,  
They ryde out al so snell,  
Trompours gon har bemes blowe,  
The lordes ryden out a-rowe.  
That were yn castell.

Ther began the turnement,  
And ech knyght leyd on other good dent,  
Wyth mases and wyth swerdes bothe ;  
Me myghte ysé some, therfore  
Stedes ywonne, and some ylore, 450  
And knyghtes\* wonther wroghth.  
Syth the rounde table was  
A bettere turnement ther nas,  
I dar well say for sothe,  
Many a lorde of Karlyoun  
That day were ybore adoun,  
Certayn withouten othe.

Of Karlyoun the ryche constable  
Rod to Launfall, without fable,  
He nolde no lengere abyde ; 460  
He smot to Launfal, and he to hym,  
Well sterne strokes, and well grym,  
Ther wer in eche a syde.  
Launfal was of hym yware,  
Out of his sadell he hym bar,  
To grounde that ylke tyde,  
And whan the constable was bore adoun,  
Gyfre lepte ynto the arsoun,  
And away he gan to ryde.

---

\* The original reading is "kyztes."

The erl of Chestere thereof segh, 470  
For wrethe yn herte he was wod negh,

And rood to syr Launfale,  
And smot hym yn the helm on hegh.  
That the crest adoun flegh,

Thus seyde the Frenssch tale.  
Launfal was mochel of myght,  
Of hys stede he did hym lyght,  
And bar hym down yn the dale ;  
Than come ther syr Launfal abowte  
Of Walssche knyghtes a greet rowte, 480  
The numbere y not how fale.

Than myghte me se scheldes ryve,  
Speres to-breste and to-dryve,  
Behynde and ek before,  
Thorugh Launfal and hys stedes dent,  
Many a knyght, verement,  
To ground was ibore.

So the prys of that turnay  
Was delyvered to Launfal that day,  
Without oth yswore ; 490  
Launfal rod to Karlyoun.  
To the meyrys hous yn the toun,  
And many a lord hym before.

And than the noble knyght Launfal  
Helde a feste ryche and ryall,

That leste fourtenyght,  
Erles and barouns fale  
Semely wer sette yn sale,  
And ryaly were adyght.  
And every day dame Triamour, 500  
Sche com to syr Launfal bour,

A day when hyt was nyght,  
Of all that ever wer ther tho,  
Segh he non bot they two,  
Gyfre and Launfal the knyght.





## LAUNFAL.

### PART II.

A knyght ther was yn Lumbardye,\*  
To syr Launfal hadde he greet envye,  
Syr Valentyne he hyghte ;  
He herde speke of syr Launfal,  
That he couth justy well,

510

And was a man of mochel myghte.  
Syr Valentyne was wonther strong,  
Fyftene feet he was longe,

Hym thoghte he brente bryghte  
Bnt he myghte with Launfal pleye,  
In the feld betwene ham tweye,  
To justy, other to fyghte.

Syr Valentyne sat yn hys halle,  
Hys massengere he let ycalle,  
And seyde he moste wende  
To syr Launfal the noble knyght,  
That was yholde so mychel of myght,  
To Bretayne he wolde hym sende ;  
And sey hym, for love of hys lemman,  
Yf sche be any gentyle woman,

520

Courteys, fre, other hende,  
That he come with me to juste,  
To kepe hys harneys from the ruste,  
And elles hys manhood schende.

---

\* This episode, the introduction of the mayor of Carleon, and his daughter, even the name of that place, and several other incidents, are entirely owing to the English poet, there being nothing of this sort in the original.

The messengere ys forth ywent, 530  
 To tho hys lordys commaundement,  
 He hadde wynde at wylle  
 Whan he was over the water ycome,  
 The way to Launfal he hath ynome,  
 And grette hym with wordes styлле :  
 And seyde, Syr, my lord, syr Valentyne,  
 A noble werroure, and queynte of gynne,  
 Hath me sent the tylle ;  
 And prayeth the, for thy lemmanes sake,  
 Thou schuldest with hym justes take. 540  
 Tho lough Launfal full styлле.

And seyde, as he was gentyl knyght,  
 Thylke day a fourtenyght,  
 He wold wyth hym play.  
 He yaf the messenger, for that tydyng,  
 A noble courser and a ryng,  
 and a robe of ray,  
 Launfal tok leve at Tryamour,  
 That was the bryght berde yn bour,  
 And keste that swete may ; 550  
 Thanne seyde that swete wyght,  
 Dreed the nothyng, syr gentyl knyght,  
 Thou schalt hym sle that day.

Launfal nolde nothyng wyth hym have,  
 But Blaunchard hys stede, and Gyfre hys knave,  
 Of all hys tair maynè ;  
 He schyppede and hadde wynd well good,  
 And wente over the solte flod,  
 Into Lumbardye.  
 Whan he was over the water ycome, 560  
 Ther the justes schulde be nome,  
 In the cyté of Atalye,  
 Syr Valentyn hadde a greet ost,  
 And syr Launfal abatede her bost,  
 Wyth lytyll cumpanye.

And whan syr Launfal was ydyght,  
 Upon Blaunchard hys stede lyght,  
 With helm, and spere, and schelde,

All that sawe hym yn armes bryght,  
 And seyde they sawe never swych a knyght, 570  
     That hym with eyen beheld.  
 Tho ryde togydere thes knyghtes two,  
 That har schaftes to-broste bo,  
     And to-scyverede yn the felde ;  
 Another cours togedere they rod,  
 That syr Launfal helm of glod,  
     In tale as hyt ys telde.

Syr Valentyn logh, and hadde good game,  
 Hadde Launfal never so moche schame,  
     Beforhond yn no fyght ; 580  
 Gyfre kedde he was good at nede,  
 And lepte upon hys maystrys stede,  
     No man ne segh with syght.  
 And er than thay togedere mette,  
 Hys lordes helm he on sette,  
     Fayre and well adyght ;  
 Tho was Launfal glad and blythe,  
 And donkede Gyfre many syde,  
     For hys dede so mochel of myght.

Syr Valentyne smot Launfal soo, 590  
 That hys scheld fel hym fro,  
     Anoon ryght yn that stounde ;  
 And Gyfre the scheld up hente,  
 And broghte hyt hys lord to presente,  
     Er hyt cam thoun to grounde.  
 Tho was Launfal glad and blythe,  
 And rode ayen the thrydde syde,  
     As a knyght of mochel mounde ;  
 Syr Valentyne he smot so there,  
 That hors and mon bothe deed were, 600  
     Gronyng wyth grysly wounde.

Alle the lordes of Atalye  
 To syr Launfal hadde greet envye,  
     That Valentyne was yslawe,



And swore that he schold dye,  
 Er he wente out of Lumbardye,  
 And be hongede, and to-drawe.  
 Syr Launfal brayde out hys fachon,  
 And as lyght as dew he leyde hem doune,  
 In a lytyll drawe, 610  
 And whan he hadde the lordes selayn,  
 He went ayen ynto Bretayn,  
 Wyth solas and wyth plawe.

The tydyng com to Artour the kyng,  
 Anoon wythout lesyng,  
 Of syr Launfales noblesse,  
 Anoon a letter to hym sende,  
 That Launfal schuld to hym wende,  
 At seynt Jonnys masse.  
 For kyng Artour would a feste holde, 620  
 Of erles and of barouns bolde,  
 Of lordynges more and lesse ;  
 Syr Launfal schud be stward of halle,  
 For to agye hys gestes alle,  
 For cowthe of largesse.

Launfal toke leve at Tryamour,  
 For to wende to kyng Artour,  
 Hys feste for to agye,  
 Ther he fond merthe and moch honour,  
 Ladyes that wer well bryght yn bour, 630  
 Of knyghtes greet cumpanye.  
 Fourty dayes leste the feste,  
 Ryche, ryall, and honeste,  
 What help hyt for to lye ?  
 And at the fourty dayes ende,  
 The lordes toke har leve to wende,  
 Everych yn hys partye.

And aftyr mete syr Gaweyn,  
 Syr Gyeryes, and Agrafayn,  
 And syr Launfal also, 640

Wente to daunce upon the grene,  
 Unther the tour ther lay the quene,  
     Wyth syxty ladyes and mo.  
 To lede the daunce Launfale was set,  
 For hys largesse he was lovede the bet,  
     Sertayn of alle tho ;  
 The quene lay out and beheld hem alle,  
 I se, sche seyde, daunce large Launfalle,  
     To hym than wyll y go.

Of alle the knyghtes that ye se there, 650  
 He ys the fayreste bachelere,  
     He ne hadde never no wyf ;  
 Tyde me good, other ylle,  
 I wyll go and wyte hys wyllle,  
     Y love hym as my lyf.  
 Sche tok with her a companye,  
 The fayrest that sche myghte aspye,  
     Syxty ladyes and fyf,  
 And went hem down anoon ryghtes,  
 Ham to pley among the knyghtes, 660  
     Well style wythouten stryf.

The quene yede to the formeste ende,  
 Betwene Launfal and Gauweyn the hende,  
     And after her ladyes bryght,  
 To daunce they wente alle yn same,  
 To se hem play hyt was fayr game,  
     A lady and a knyght.  
 They hadde menstrales of moch honours,  
 Fydeler, sytolys, and trompours,  
     And elles hyt were unryght ; 670  
 Ther they playde, for sothe to say,  
 After mete the somerys day,  
 All what hyt was neygh nyght.

And whanne the daunce began to slake,  
 The quene gan Launfal to counsell take,  
     And seyde yn thys manere :  
 Sertaynlyche, syr knyght,  
 I have the lovyd wyth all my myght,  
     More than thys seven yere.

But that thou lovye me, 680  
Sertes y dye for love of the,  
Launfal, my lemman dere.  
Than answerede the gentyll knyght,  
I nell be traytour thay ne nyght,  
Be god, that all may stere.

Sche seyde, Fy on the, thou coward,  
An hongeth worth thou hyc and hard,  
That thou ever were ybore,  
That thou lyvest hyt ys pytè,  
Thou lovyest no woman, ne no woman the, 690  
Thow wer worthy forlore.  
The knyght was sore aschamed tho,  
To speke ne myghte he forgo,  
And seyde the quene before :  
I have loved a fayryr woman,  
Than thou ever leydest thy ney upon,  
Thys seven yer and more.

Hyr lothlokste mayde, wythoute wene,  
Myghte bet be a quene  
Than thou in all thy lyve. 700  
Therefore the quene was swythe wrought,  
Sche taketh hyr maydenes, and forth hy goth,  
Into her tour also blyve,  
And anon sche ley down yn hyr bedde,  
For wrethe syk sche hyr bredde,  
And swore, so moste sche thryve,  
Sche wold of Launfal be so awreke,  
That all the lond schuld of hym speke,  
Wythinne the dayes fyfe.

King Artour com fro huntynge, 710  
Blythe and glad yn all thyng,  
To hys chamber than wente he,  
Anoone the quene on hym gan crye,  
But y be awreke, y schall dye,  
Myn herte wyll breke athre,



I spak to Launfal yn my game,  
 And he besofte me of schame,  
     My lemman for to be ;  
 And of a lemman hys yelp he made,  
 That the lodlokest mayde that sche hadde 720  
     Myght be a quene above me.

Kyng Artour was well worth,  
 And be god he swor hys oth,  
     That Launfal schuld be slawe ;  
 He wente aftyr doghty knyghtes,  
 To brynge Launfal anoon ryghtes,  
     To be hongeth and to-drawe.  
 The knyghtes softe hym anoon,  
 But Launfal was to hys chamber gon,  
     To han hadde solas and plawe ; 730  
 He softe hys leef, but sche was lore,  
 As sche hadde warnede hym before,  
     Tho was Launfal unfawe.

He lokede yn hys alner,  
 That fond hym spendyng all plener,  
     Whan that he hadde nede,  
 And ther nas noon, for soth to say,  
 And Gyfre was yryde away,  
     Up[on] Blaunchard hys stede.  
 All that he hadde before ywonne, 740  
 Hyt malt as snow ayens the sunne,  
     In romaunce as we rede ;  
 Hys armur, that was whyt as flour,  
 Hyt becom of blak colour,  
     And thus than Launfal seyde :

Alas, he seyde, my creature,  
 How schall i from the endure,  
     Swetyng Tryamour ?  
 All my joye i have forlore,  
 And the that me ys worst sore, 750  
     Thou blysful berde yn bour.\*

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\* "These two lines," at least in Mr. Ellis's edition, he says, "are rather obscure;" but that obscurity was merely occasioned by his printing THAN for THOU. The perspicacious editor, nevertheless, saw how the original must have been. Another typographical error, in that edition, has been the cause of his explaining *soth* (misprinted *for*) by *sure*.

He bet hys body and hys hedde ek,  
 And cursede the mouth that he wyth spek,  
     Wyth care and greet dolour ;  
 And, for sorow, yn that stounde,  
 Anoon he fell aswowe to grounde ;  
     Wyth that come knyghtes four,

And bond hym, and ladde hym tho,  
 Tho was the knyghte yn doble wo,  
     Before Artour the kyng.  
 Than seyde kyng Artour,  
 Fyle ataynte traytour !

760

Why madest thou swyche yelpyng ?  
 That thy lemmannes lodlokest mayde  
 Was fayrer than my wyf, thou seyde,  
     That was a fowl lesynge ;  
 And thou besoftest her before than,  
 That sche schold be thy lemman,  
     That was mysprowd lykyng.

The knyght answerede, with egre mode,  
 Before the kyng ther he stode,  
     The quene on hym gan lye :  
 " Sethe that y ever was yborn.  
 I besofte her here beforne  
     Never of no folye.

770

But sche seyde y nas no man,  
 Ne that me lovede no woman,  
     Ne no womannes companye ;  
 And i answerede her and sayde,  
 That my lemmannes lodlekest mayde  
     To be a quene was better wordye.

780

Sertes, lordynges, hyt ys so,  
 I am a redy for to tho  
     All that the court wyll loke.  
 To say the soth, wythout les,  
 All togedere how hyt was,  
     Twelve knyghtes wer dryve to boke.  
 All they seyde ham betwene,  
 That knewe the maners of the quene,  
     And the queste toke ;

790



The quene bar los of swych a word,  
 That sche lovede lemmannes wythout her lord,  
 Har never on hyt forsoke.

Therfor they seyden alle,  
 Hyt was long on the quene, and not on Launfal,  
 Therof they gonne hym skere ;  
 And yf he myghte hys lemman brynge,  
 That he made of swych yelpynge,  
 Other the maydenes were  
 Bryghtere than the quene of hewe, 800  
 Launfal schuld be holde trewe,  
 Of that yn all manere ;  
 And yf he myghte not brynge hys lef,  
 He schud be hongede as a thef,  
 They seyden all yn fere.

Alle yn fere they made proferynge,  
 That Launfal schuld hys lemman brynge :  
 Hys heed he gan to laye.  
 Than seyde the quene, wythout lesynge,  
 Yyf he bryngeth a fayrer thyng, 810  
 Put out my ceyn gray.  
 Whan that wajowr was take on honde,  
 Launfal therto two borwes fonde,  
 Noble knyghtes twayn,  
 Syr Percevall, and syr Gawayn,  
 They wer hys borwes, soth to sayn,  
 Tyll a certayn day.

The certayn day, i yow plyght,  
 Was twelve moneth and fourtenyght,  
 That he schuld hys lemman brynge ; 820  
 Syr Launfal, that noble knyght,  
 Greet sorow and care yn hym was lyght,  
 Hys hondys he gan wrynge.  
 So greet sorowe hym was upan,  
 Gladlyche hys lyf he wold a forgon,  
 In care and in marnynge ;  
 Gladlyche he wold hys hed forgo,  
 Everych man therfore was wo,  
 That wyste of that tydynge.



The certayn day was nyghyng, 830  
 Hys borowes hym broght befor the kyng,  
 The kyng recordedde tho,  
 And bad hym bryng hys lef yn syght,  
 Syr Launfal seyde that he ne myght,  
 Therfore hym was well wo.  
 The kyng commaundede the barouns alle,  
 To yeve jugement on Launfal,  
 And dampny hym to sclo.  
 Than sayde the erl of Cornewayle,  
 That was wyth ham at that counceyle, 840  
 We wyllyd naght do so :

Greet schame hyt wor us alle upon  
 For to dampny that gentylman,  
 That hath be hende and fre ;  
 Therfor, lordynges, doth be my reed,  
 Our kyng, we wyllyth another wey lede,  
 Out of lond Launfal schall fle.  
 And as they stod thus spekyng,  
 The barouns sawe come rydyng  
 Ten maydenes bryght of ble, 850  
 Ham thoghte they were so bryght and schene,  
 That the lodlokest, wythout wene,  
 Har quene than myghte be.

Tho seyde Gawayn, that corteys knyght,  
 Launfal, brodyr, drede the no wyght,  
 Her cometh thy lemman hende.  
 Launfal answerede, and seyde Y wys,  
 Non of ham my lemman nys,  
 Gawayn, my lefly frende.  
 To that castell they wente ryghte, 860  
 At the gate they gonne alyght,  
 Befor kyng Artour gonne they wende,  
 And bede hym make a redy hastyly  
 A fayr chamber for her lady,  
 That was come of kinges kende.

Ho ys your lady ? Artour seyde.  
 Ye schull y wyte, seyde the mayde,  
 For sche cometh ryde.

The kyng commaundede, for her sake,  
The fayryst chaunber for to take, 870  
In hys palys that tyde.

And anon to hys barouns he sente,  
For to yeve jugement  
Upon that traytour full of pryde ;  
The barouns answerede, anoon ryght,  
Have we seyn the madenes bryght,  
Whe schull not longe abyde.

A newe tale they gonne tho,  
Some of wele, and some of wo, 880  
Har lord the kyng to queme,  
Some dampnede Launfal there,  
And some made hym quyt and skere,  
Har tales wer well breme.  
Tho saw they other ten maydenes bryght,  
Fayryr than the other ten of syght,  
As they gone hym deme,  
They ryd upon joly moyles of Spayne,  
With sadell and brydell of Champayne,  
Her lorayns lyght gonne leme.

They wer yclodeth yn samyt tyre, 890  
Ech man hadde greet desyre  
To se har clodynge.  
Tho seyde Gaweyn, that curtayse knyght,  
Launfal, her cometh thy swete wyght,  
That may thy bote brynge.  
Launfal answerede, with drery doght,  
And seyde, Alas, y knowe her noght,  
Ne non of all the ofsprynge.  
Forth they wente to that palys,  
And lyghte at the hye deys, 900  
Before Artour the kyng.

And grette the kyng and quene ek,  
And oo mayde thys wordes spak,  
To the kyng Artour,  
Thyn halle agrayde and hele the walles,  
Wyth clodes and wyth ryche palles,  
Ayens my lady Tryamour.



The kyng answered bedene,  
 Well come, ye maydenes schene,  
     Be our lord the savyour. 910  
 He commaundede Launcelot du Lake to brynge hem  
     yn fere,  
 In the chamber ther har felawes were,  
     Wyth merthe and moche honour.

Anoon the quene suppose gyle  
 That Launfal schulld yn a whyle  
     Be ymade quyt and skere,  
 Thorugh hys lemman that was commynge,  
 Anon sche seyde to Artour the kyng,  
     Syre, curtays yf [thou] were,  
 Or yf thou lovedest thyn honour, 920  
 I schuld be awreke of that traytour,  
     That doth me changy chere,  
 To Launfal thou schuldest not spare,  
 Thy barouns dryveth the to bysmare.  
     He ys hem lef and dere.

And as the quene spak to the kyng,  
 The barouns seygh come rydyng  
     A damesele alone,  
 Upoon a whyt comely palfrey,  
 They saw never non so gay, 930  
     Upon the grounde gone.  
 Gentyll, jolyf, as bryd on bowe,  
 In all manere fayr inowe,  
     To wonye yn worldly wone,  
 The lady was bryght as blosme on brere,  
 Wyth eyen gray, wyth lovelych chere,  
     Her leyre lyght schoone.

As rose on rys her rode was red,  
 The her schon upon her hed,  
     As gold wyre that schynyth bryght ; 940  
 Sche hadde a croune upon her molde,  
 Of ryche stones and of golde,



That lossom lemede lyght.  
 The lady was clad yn purpere palle,  
 Wyth gentyll body and myddyl small,  
 That semely was of syght ;  
 Her mantyll was furryth with whyt ermyn,  
 Ireversyd jolyf and fyn,  
 No rychere be ne myght.

Her sadell was semyly sett, 950  
 The sambus wer grene felvet,  
 Ipaynted with ymagerye,  
 The bordure was of belles,  
 Of ryche gold and nothing elles,  
 That any man myghte aspye.  
 In the arsouns, before and behynde,  
 Were twey stones of Ynde,  
 Gay for the maystrye ;  
 The paytrelle of her palfraye,  
 Was worth an erldome, stoute and gay, 960  
 The best yn Lumbardye.

A gerfawcon sche bar on her hond,  
 A softe pas her palfray fond,  
 That men her schuld beholde ;  
 Thorough Karlyon rood that lady,  
 Twey whyte grehoundys ronne hyr by,  
 Har colers were of golde.  
 And whan Launfal sawe that lady,  
 To alle the folk he gon crye an hy,  
 Both to yonge and olde, 970  
 Her, he seyde, comyth my lemman swete,  
 Sche myghte me of my balys bete,  
 Yef that lady wolde.

Forth sche wente ynto the halle,  
 Ther was the quene and the ladyes alle,  
 And also kyng Artour,  
 Her maydenes come ayens her ryght,  
 To take her styrop whan sche lyght,  
 Of the lady dame Tyramour.

Sche dede of her mantyll on the flet, 980  
 That men schuld her beholde the bet,  
     Wythoute a more sojour,  
 Kyng Artour gan her sayre grete,  
 And sche hym agayn, with wordes swete,  
     That were of greet valour.

Up stod the quene and ladyes stoute,  
 Her for to beholde all aboute,  
     How evene sche stod upryght ;  
 Than wer they wyth her also donne,  
 As ys the mone ayen the sonne, 990  
     A day whan hyt ys lyght.  
 Than seyde sche to Artour the kyng,  
 Syr, hydyr i com for swych a thyng,  
     To skere Launfal the knyght,  
 That he never, yn no folye,  
 Besofte the quene of no drurye,  
     By dayes ne be nyght.

Therfor, syr kyng, good kepe thou myne,  
 He bad naght her, but sche bad hym,  
     Here lemman for to be ; 1000  
 And he answerede her and seyde,  
 That hys lemmannes lothlokest mayde  
     Was fayryr than was sche.  
 Kyng Artour seyde, wythoute nothe,  
 Ech may ysè that ys sothe,  
     Bryghtere that ye be.  
 Wyth that dame Tryamour to the quene geth,  
 And blew on her swych a breth,  
     That never eft myght sche se.

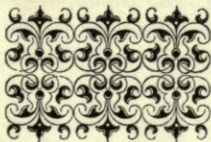
The lady lep an hyr palfray, 1010  
 And bad hem alle have good day,  
     Sche nolde no lengere abyde ;  
 Wyth that com Gyfre all so prest,  
 Wyth Launfalys stede out of the forest,  
     And stod Launfal besyde.  
 The knyght to horse began to sprynge,  
 Anoon wythout any lettynge,  
     Wyth hys lemman away to ryde ;



The lady tok her maydenys achon,  
And wente the way that sche hadde er gon, 1020  
Wyth solas and wyth pryde.

The lady rod dorth Cardevyle,  
Fer ynto a jolyf ile,  
Olyroun that hyghte ;  
Every yer upon a certayn day,  
Me may here Launfales stede nay,  
And hym se with syght.  
Ho that wyll there axsy justus,  
To kepe hys armes fro the rustus,  
In turnement other fyght ; 1030  
Dar he never forther gon,  
Ther he may fynde justes anoon,  
Wyth syr Launfal the knyght.

Thus Launfal, wythouten fable,  
That noble knyght of the rounde table,  
Was take yn to the fayrre ;  
Seththe saw hym yn thys lond no man,  
Ne no more of hym telle y ne can,  
For sothe, wythout lye.  
Thomas Chestre made thys tale, 1040  
Of the noble knyght syr Launfale,  
Good of chyvalrye.  
Jhesus, that ys hevene kyng,  
Yeve us alle hys blessyng,  
And hys modyr Marye !









## LYBEAUS DISCONUS.\*

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THIS ancient romance is preserved in the Cotton MS. already mentioned, marked Caligula A. II. from which it is here given. About the latter half of another copy is in one of Sir Matthew Hales' MSS. in the library of Lincoln's Inn, apparently a different translation, but only containing, as usual, numberless various readings of little consequence; a third is said by Dr. Percy to be in his folio MS. It was certainly printed before the year 1600, being mentioned, by the name of "Libbius," in "Vertue's common wealth; or The highway to honour," by Henry Crosse, published in that year; and is even alluded to by Skelton, who died in 1529:—

"And of Sir Libius named Disconius."

The French original is unknown.

A story similar to that which forms the principal subject of the present poem may be found in the "Voiage and travaile of sir John Maundeville" (London, 1725, 8vo, p. 28). It, likewise, by some means, has made its way into a pretendedly ancient Northumberland ballad, entitled "The laidly worm of Spindlestone-heugh," written, in reality, by Robert Lambe, vicar of Norham, author of "The history of chess," &c, who had, however, heard some old stanzas, of which he availed himself, sung by a maid-servant. The remote original of all these stories was, probably,

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\* i.e. *Le Beau desconnu*, or the fair unknown. The running-title is ever after uniformly *Desconus*; but the editor thought himself at liberty to follow the head, which bears *Disconus*; and had proceeded too far before he began to doubt the propriety of his conduct. It is never *Disconus* in the text. Mr. Tyrwhitt, however, so prints it.

much older than the time of Herodotus, by whom it is related (Urania).

Chaucer, in his "Rime of sire Thopas," among the "romances of pris" there enumerated, mentions those

"Of sire Libeaux and Pleindamour,"

(as Tyrwhitt reads after all the MSS. truly, and the old printed copies having Blandamoure, or Blaindamoure); upon which the learned and ingenious editor of the "Reliques of ancient English poetry," in the first three editions of that work, remarks that "As sir [Pleindamoure or] Blandamoure, no romance with this title has been discovered; but as the word occurs in that of *Libeaux*, 'tis possible Chaucer's memory deceived him: a remark, in which he is implicitly followed by his friend Warton, who says, "Of sir Blandamoure, I find nothing more than the name occurring in Sir Lebeaux" (History of English Poetry, I, 208); which he, most certainly, did not there find. "Even the titles of our old romances," he says, "such as Sir Blandamoure, betray their French extraction." (*Ib.* 139.) From the fourth and last edition, however, of the said Reliques, we now learn that the word in question is neither Pleindamoure nor Blandamoure, but Blaundemere, which is foreign to the purpose; neither does any such name occur in the present copy; nor, as the passage is carefully suppressed by the right reverend possessor, can one venture to imagine whether it be that of a man, a woman, or a horse.\* This force of tergiversation has, to use the worthy prelate's own words, "destroyed all confidence."

Generally speaking, the Cotton MS. has *z* for *y* or *gh*, and *y* for *th*. The rhymes also of the third and sixth lines of every two stanzas are the same, except in a few instances, which have rendered it necessary to disregard that circumstance.

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\* This *venerabilissimus episcopus* had the address to persuade a gentleman to whom he shewed his folio MS. and whose testimony was to convince the scepticism of the present editor, that he actually saw the word *Blandamoure*, which, it now turns out, does not exist; though he would not suffer him to transcribe the line in which it occurred: he will easily recollect his name: upon a different occasion he gave Mr. Steevens a transcript from the above MS. of the vulgar ballad of *Old Simon the King*, with a strict injunction not to show it to this editor (who suspected, as the fact turned out, that he had sophisticated it, in a note to the last edition of Shakespeare), which, however, he immediately brought to him.





## LYBEAUS DISCONUS.

JHESU CRYST, our sayvour,  
And hys modyr, that swete flour,  
Helpe hem at her nede  
That harkeneth of a conquerour,  
Wys of wytte and whyght werroure,  
And doughty man in dede.  
Hys name was called Geynleyn,  
Beyete he was of syr Gaweyn,  
Be a forest syde ;  
Of stouter knyght, and profytable,  
Wyth Artour of the rounde table,\*  
Ne herde ye never rede.

10

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\* This famous table, to which were attached one hundred knights, was the property of Leodegrance, king of Camelard, who appears to have had it from Uther Pendragon, for whom it had been made by the sorcerer Merlin, in token, as the book says, of the roundness of the world, (or, according to his own romance), in imitation of one established by Joseph of Arimathea, in the name of that which Jesus had made at the supper of the twelve apostles, (see vol. I. fo. 40, &c.), and came to king Arthur, as the portion of his wife Guenever, daughter of that monarch. Every knight had his seat, in which was his name, written in letters of gold. One of these was "the siege perillous," where no man was to sit but one: an honour reserved for Sir Galaad, the son of Lancelot du Lake. "King Arthur," according to the history, "stablished all his knights, and gave them lands that were not rich of land, and charged them never to do outrage nor murder, and always to fle treason. Also, by no means, to be cruel, but to give mercy unto him that asked mercy, upon paine of forfeiture of their worship, and lordship of king Arthur, for evermore, and alway to do ladies, damosels, and gentlewomen, succour upon paine of death. Also that no man take no batailles in a wrong quarell for no law, nor for wordly goods. Unto this were all the knights sworne of the round table, both old and young.' *Mort d' Arthur*, Part I., C. 59. It is not once mentioned by Geoffrey of Monmouth,

Thys Gynleyn was fayr of syght,  
 Gentyll of body, of face bryght,  
 All bastard yef he were ;  
 Hys modyr kepte hym yn clos,  
 For douute of wykkede loos,  
 As doughty chyld and dere.

And for love of hys fayr vyys,  
 Hys modyr clepede hym *Bewfys*, 20  
 And no nothyr name ;  
 And hymself was full nys,  
 He ne axede naght, y wys,  
 What he hyght, at hys dame.  
 As hyt befelle upon a day,  
 To wode he wente, on hys play,  
 Of dere to have hys game ;  
 He fond a knyght whar he lay,  
 In armes that wer stout and gay,  
 Isclayne, and made full tame. 30

That chyld dede of the knyghtes wede,  
 And anon he gan hym schrede,  
 In that ryche armur ;  
 Whan he hadde do that dede,  
 To Glastynbery he yede,  
 Ther ley the kyng Artour.

He knelede yn the halle,  
 Before the knyghtes alle,  
 And grette hem with honour ;  
 And seyde, Kyng Artour, my lord, 40  
 Graunte me to speke a word,  
 I pray the pur amour.

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though Master Wace, not twenty years after the time of that unworthy prelate,  
 thus speaks of it :—

“*Fist Artur la ronde table,  
 Dunt Breton dient meinte fable.*”

Than seyde Artour the kyng,  
 Anoon without any dwellyng,  
 Tell me thyn name uplyght,  
 For sethen y was ybore,  
 Ne fond y me before  
 Non so fayr of syght.

That chylde seyde, Be seynt Jame,  
 I not what ys my name,

50

I am the more nys ;  
 But, whyle y was at hame,  
 My modyr, yn her game,  
 Clepede me *Beau fyz*.  
 Than seyde Artour the kyng,  
 Thys ys a wonder thyng,  
 Be god and seynt Denys,  
 Whanne he that wolde be a knyght,  
 Ne wat noght what he hyght,  
 And ys so fayr of vys.

60

Now wyll y yeve hym a name,  
 Before yow alle yn same,  
 For he ys so fayr and fre ;  
 Be god, and be seynt Jame,  
 So clepede hym never hys dame,  
 What woman that so hyt be.  
 Now clepeth hym alle yn us  
*Lybeaux desconus*.

For the love of me ; \*  
 Than may ye wete a row  
 The fayre unknowe,  
 Sertes so hatte he.

70

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\* Giglan, the natural son of Gawain and the fairy *Blanchevallee*, appears at the court of king Arthur ; and, being asked his name, says that his mother (who had carefully concealed it) had never called him anything but *Beaufils* ; in consequence of which the queen gives him that of *Le bel inconnu*. (*Histoire de Giglan*, n. d. 4to. g. 1.) In this romance the lady is called Helen ; but the main incidents bear little or no resemblance to those of *Lybeaus*. See also the episode or adventure of *Beaumains*, in Sir Thomas Malory's *Mort d'Arthur*.

In the *Promptorium parvulorum* (Har. MS. 221) *Befyce* is explained *filius*.

*of Beaus of Har*



Kyng Artour anon ryght  
 Made hym tho a knyght,  
 In the selve day;  
 And yaf hym armes bryght,  
 Hym gertte wyth swerde of myght,  
 For sothe as y yow say.  
 And henge on hym a scheld,  
 Ryche and over geld  
 Wyth a griffoun of say;  
 And hym betok hys fader Gaweyn,  
 For to teche hym on the playne,  
 Of ech knyghtes play.

80

Whan he was knyght imade,  
 Anon a bone there he bad,  
 And seyde, My lord so fre,  
 In herte y were ryght glad,  
 That ferste fyghte yf y had,  
 That ony man asketh the.  
 Thanne seyde Artour the kyng,  
 I grante the thyn askyng,  
 What batayle that so hyt be;  
 But me thyngeth thou art to ying,  
 For to done a good fyghtyng,  
 Be awght that y can se.

90

Wythoute more resoun,  
 Duk, erl, and baroun,  
 Whesch and yede to mete;\*

---

\* It was a constant custom, in former times, to wash the hands before sitting down to, and after rising up from table. Thus, in *Emare*, V. 217:—

“Then the lordes that wer grete,  
 They wesch and seten down to mete,  
 And folk hem served swyde.”

Again, V. 889:—

“Then the lordes, that wer grete,  
 Whesch en ayeyn aftyr mete,  
 And then com spycerye.”

Again, in *Sir Orpheo*, V. 473:—

“The steward wasched and wente to mete.”

Again, in *Le bone Florence of Rome*, V. 1009:—

“Then they wysche, and to mete be gone.”

Thus, also, in *Robyn Hode and the potter*, the sheriff says—

“Let os was, and go to mete.”

Of all manere fusoun, 100  
As lordes of renoun,

Ynowgh they hadde etc.  
Ne hadde Artour bote a whyle,  
The mountance of a myle,  
At hys table ysete,  
Ther com a mayde ryde,  
And a dwerk be here syde,  
All beswette for hete.

That mayde was clepede Elene, 110  
Gentyll, bryght, and schene,  
A lady messenger ;

Ther nas contesse, ne quene,  
So semelych on to sene,  
That myghte be her pere.  
Sche was clodeth in Tars,  
Rowmé and nodyng skars,  
Pelvred wyth blauner ;  
Her sadell and her brydell, yn fere,  
Full of dyamandys were,  
Melk was her destrere. 120

The dwerk was clodeth yn Ynde,  
Before and ek behynde,  
Stout he was and pert ;  
Among alle Crystene kende,  
Swych on ne schold no man fynde,  
Hys surcote was overt.

Hys berd was yelow as ony wax,  
To hys gerdell henge the plex,  
I dar well say yn certe ;  
Hys schon wer with gold ydyght, 130  
And kopeth as a knyght,  
That semede no povert.

Teandelayn was hys name,  
Well swyde sprong hys fame,  
Be north and be southe ;  
Myche he couthe of game,  
With sytole, sautrye yn same,

Harpe, fydele and crouthe.  
 He was a noble dysour,  
 Wyth ladyes of valour,  
 A mery man of mouthe ;  
 He spak to that mayde hende,  
 To telle thyn erynde,  
 Tyme hyt were nouthe.

140

That mayde knelede yn halle,  
 Before the knyghtes \* alle,  
 And greet hem wyth honour,  
 And seyde, A cas ther ys yfalle,  
 Worse wythyn walle  
 Was never non of dolour.  
 My lady of Synadowne  
 Is broght yn strong pryson,  
 That ys greet of valour,  
 Sche prayd the sende her a knyght,  
 With herte good and lyght,  
 To wynne her with honour.

150

Up start the yonge knyght,  
 Hys herte was good and lyght,  
 And seyde, Artour, my lord,  
 I schall tho that fyght,  
 And wynne that lady bryght,  
 Yef thou art trewe of word.  
 Than seyde Artour, That ys soth,  
 Certayn withoute noth,  
 Thereto y bere record ;  
 God grante the grace and myght,  
 To holde up that lady ryghte,  
 Wyth dente of thy sword.

160

Than gan Elene to chyde  
 And seyde, Alas that tyde  
 That i was hyder ysent !  
 Thys word schall spryng \* wyde,  
 Lord kyng now ys thy threde  
 And thy manhod yschent.

170

\* Original reading : *knyzote*.† Original reading : *spyng*.



Whan thou schalt sende a chyld  
 That ys wytles and wylde,  
     To dele thoghty dent,  
 And hast knyghtes of mayn,  
 Launcelet, Perceval, and Gaweyn,  
     Prys yn ech turnement.

180

Lybeaus desconus answerde\*  
 Yet was y never aferde  
     For doute of mannys awe,  
 To fyghte wyth spere or swerd,  
 Some dell y have ylerde,  
     Ther many men were yslawe.  
 He that fleth for drede,  
 I wolde, be way or strete,  
     Hys body wer to-drawe ;  
 I wyll the batayle take,  
 And never on forsake,  
     As hyt ys Artours lawe.

190

Than seyde Artour anon ryght,  
 Thou getest none other knyght,  
     Be god that boghte me dere,  
 Yef the thyngyth hym not wyght,†  
 Go gete the on wher thou myght,  
     That be of more powere.  
 That mayde, for wreththe and hete,  
 Nolde neydyr drynke ne ete,  
     For alle tho that ther were,  
 But satte down all thys mayd,  
 Tyll the table was ylayd,  
     Sche and the dwerke yn fere.

200

Kyng Artour yn that stounde,  
 Hette of the table rounde,  
     Four the beste knyhtes,  
 In armes hole and sounde,  
 The beste that myghte be founde,  
     Arme Lybeaus anoon ryghtes.

210

\* Original reading : *answerede*.† Original reading : *Yef he thyngeth the not wyght..*

And seyde, thorgh helpe of Cryst,  
 That in the flome tok baptyste,  
 He schall holde all hys heghtes,\*  
 And be good champyoun  
 To the lady of Synadoun,  
 And holde up alle her ryghtes.

To army thir knyghtes wer fayn,  
 The ferste was syr Gaweyn,  
 That other syr Percevale,  
 The thyrthe syr Eweyn,† 220  
 The ferthde was syr Agrafrayn ;  
 So seyth the Frensch tale.  
 They caste on hym a scherte of selk,  
 A gypell as whyte as melk,  
 In that semely sale ;  
 And syght an hawberk bryght,  
 That rychely was adyght,  
 Wyth mayles thykke and smale.

Gaweyn hys owene syre  
 Heng abowte hys swyre 230  
 A scheld with a gryffoun,  
 And Launcelet hym broght a sper,  
 In werre with hym well to were,  
 And also a fell fachoun.  
 And syr Oweyn hym broght a stede,  
 That was good at everych nede,  
 And egre as lyoun,  
 And an helm of ryche atyre,  
 That was stele, and noon yre,  
 Percevale sette on hys croun. 240

The knyght to hors gan spryng,  
 And rod to Artour the kyng,  
 And seyde, My lord hende,  
 Yef me thy blessyng,  
 Anoon wythoute dwellynge,  
 My wyll ys for to wende.

---

\* Original reading : *hestes*.

† Original reading : *Gaweyn*.



Artour hys hond up haf,  
 And hys blessinge he hym yaf,  
 As korteyns kyng and hende ;  
 And seyde, God grante the grace, 250  
 And of spede space,  
 To brynge the lady out of bende.

The mayde, stout and gay,  
 Lep on her palfray,  
 The dwerk rod hyr besyde :  
 And tyll the thyrd day  
 Upon the knyght alwey  
 Ever sche began chyde.  
 And seyde, Lorell and kaytyf,\*  
 They thou wher worth swychy † fyfe, 260  
 Ytynt now ys thy pryde ;  
 Thys pase before kepeth a knyght,  
 That wyth ech man wyll fyght,  
 Hys name ys spronge wyde.

Wylleam Celebronche,  
 Hys fyght may no man staunch,  
 He ys werroure so wyth ;  
 Thorugh herte, other thorough honche,  
 Wyth hys sper he wyll launche  
 All that ayens hym ryghtte. 270  
 Than seyde Lybeaus desconus,  
 Is hys feghtyng swych vys ?  
 Was he never yhytte ?  
 Whatsoever me betyde,  
 To hym y wyll ryde,  
 And loke how he sytte.

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\* Beaumains, in his expedition to relieve the Lady Liones, is treated in a similar manner by her sister Linet ; it is a very entertaining adventure. See *Mort d'Arthur*, P 1, C. 122, &c. See, also, that of the damsel *Maledisaunt*, and the young knight nicknamed *La cote male taillé* P. 2, C. 44.

† Original reading: *swyr*.



Forth they ryden all thre,  
 Wyth merthe and greet solemnyte,  
 Be a castell aunterous,  
 And the knyght they gon ysè, 280  
 Iarmeth bryght of ble,  
 Up on the Vale perylous.  
 He bar a scheld of grene,  
 Wyth thre lyouns of gold schene,  
 Well prowde and precyous,  
 Of wych lengell and trappes  
 To dele ech man rappes  
 Ever he was fous.

And whan he hadde of hem syght  
 To hem he rod full ryght, 290  
 And seyde, Welcome, *beau frer*,  
 Ho that rydyght her day other nyght  
 Wyth me he mot take fyght,  
 Other leve hys armes here.  
 Well, seyde Lybeaus desconus,  
 For love of swete Jhesus,  
 Now let us passe skere ;  
 We haveth for to wende,  
 And beth fer from our frende,  
 I and thys meyde yn fere. 300

Wylleam answerede tho,  
 Thou myght not skapy so,  
 So god gef me good reste,  
 We wylleth er thou go  
 Fyghte bothe two .  
 A forlang her be-weste.  
 Than seyde Lybeaus, Now y se  
 That hyt nell non other be,  
 In haste tho dy beste.  
 Thou take thy cours wyth schafte, 310  
 Yef thou art knyght of crafte,  
 For her es myn all preste.

No lengere they nolde abyde,  
 Togedere they gonne ryde,  
     Wyth well greet randoun ;  
 Lybeaus desconus that tyde  
 Smot Wylleam yn the syde  
     Wyth a sper feloun.  
 And Wylleam sat so faste,  
 That hys styropes to-braste,  
     And hys hynder arsoun ;  
 Wylleam gan to stoupe  
 Mydde hys horses kroupe  
     That he fell adoun.

320

Hys stede ran away,  
 Wylleam ne naght longe lay,  
     But start up anoon ryght ;  
 And seyde, Be my fay,\*  
 Before thys ylke day  
     Ne fond y non so wyght.  
 Now my sted† ys ago,  
 Fyghte we a fote also,  
     As thou art hendi knyght.  
 Tho seyde Lybeau desconus,  
 Be the love of Jhesus,  
     Therto y am full lyght.

330

Togedere they gone spryng,  
 Fauchouns hy gonne out flyng,  
     And foghte fell and faste ;  
 So harde they gonne drynge  
 That feer, without lesynge,  
     Out of har helmes braste.  
 But Wylleam Selebraunche  
 Lybeau desconus gan lonche  
     Thorghout that scheld yn haste,  
 A kantell fell to grounde,  
 Lybeau that ylke stounde  
     In hys herte hyt kaste.

340

\* Original reading : *lay*.† Original reading : *iste*.

Thanne Lybeaus wys and whyght  
Before hym as a noble knyght,

350

As werroure queynte and sclegh,  
Hawberk and krest yn fyght  
He made fle doun ryght

Of Wylleames helm and hegh.  
And wyth the poynt of hys swerd  
He schavede Wylleam ys berd,

And com by flessch ryght neygh ;  
Wylleam smot to hym tho,  
That hys sword brast a-two,

That many man hyt seygh.

360

Tho gan Wylleam to crye,  
For love or Seynt Marye,

Alyve let me passe ;  
Hyt wer greet vylanye  
To tho a knyght to deye

Wepeneles yn place.  
Than seyde Lybeaus desconus,  
For love of swete Jhesus,

Of lyve hast thou no grace,  
But yef thou swere an oth,  
Er than we two goth,

Ryght her before my face.

370

In haste knele adoun,  
And swer an my fachoun

Thou schalt to Artour wende,  
And sey, Lord of renoun,  
As overcome and prysoun,

A knyght me hyder gan sende.  
That ys yclepede yn us  
Lybeaus desconus,

380

Unknowe of keth and kende.  
Wylleam on knees doun sat,  
And swor as he hym hat,

Her forward word and ende.



Thus departede they alle,  
 Wyllyam to Artours halle  
 Tok the ryghte way ;  
 As kas hyt began falle  
 Knyghtes proud yn palle  
 He mette that selve day.

390

Hys susteres sones thre  
 Wher the knyghtes fre,  
 That weren so stout and gay,  
 Whann they sawe Wyllyam blede,  
 As men that wolde awyede,  
 They made greet deray :  
 And seyde, Eem Wylleam,  
 Ho hath down the thys scham,  
 That thou bledest so yerne ?  
 He seyde, Be seynt Jame,  
 On that naght to blame,  
 A knyght stout and sterne.

400

A dwerk ryght her before,  
 Hys squyer as he wore,  
 And ek a well fayr wyght ;  
 But othyng grevyth me sore,  
 That he hath do me swore,  
 Upon hys fawchon bryght,  
 That y ne schall never more,  
 Tyll y come Artour before,  
 Sojourne day ne nyght,  
 For prisoner i mot me yeld,  
 As overcome yn feld,  
 Of hys owene knyght,  
 And never ayens hym bere  
 Nother scheld ne spere ;  
 All this y have hym hyght.

410

Thanne seyde the knyghtes thre,  
 Thou schalt full well awreke be,  
 For sothe wythout fayle ;  
 He alone ayens us thre  
 Nys naght worth a stre  
 For to holde batayle.

420

Wend forth, eem, and do thyn othe.  
 And the traytour, be the rothe,  
     We schull hym asayle ;  
 Right, be godes grace,  
 Ther he thys forest passe  
     Thaugh he be dykke of mayle.

Now lete we Wylyam be, 430  
 That wente yn hys jorne,  
     Toward Artour the kyng ;  
 Of these knyghtes thre  
 Hearkeneth, lordynges fre,  
     A ferly fayr fyghtyng.  
 They armede hem full well,  
 Yn yren and yn stel,  
     Wythout ony dwellyng,\*  
 And leptede on stedes sterne,  
 And after gon yerne, 440  
     To sle that knyght so yenge.

Herof wyste no wyght  
 Lybeaus the yonge knyght,  
     But rod forth pas be pas ;  
 He and that mayde bryght  
 Togydere made all nyght  
     Game and greet solas.  
 Mercy hy gan hym crye  
 That hy spak vylanye,  
     He foryaf here that trespas. 450  
 De dwerke was her squyer,  
 And servede her fer and ner,  
     Of all that nede was.

A morn, whan that hyt was day,  
 They wente yn har jornay  
     Toward Synadowne,  
 Thanne saw they knyghtes thre,  
 In armes bryght of ble,  
     Ryde out of Karlowne.

---

\* Original reading : *Well*yng.



All yarmed ynto the teth,  
Everych swor hys deth,  
And stedes baye browne,  
And cryde to hym full ryght,  
Thef, turne agayn and fyght,  
Wyth the we denketh rounce.

460

Lybeaus desconus tho kryde,  
I am redy to ryde  
Ayens yow all ysame.  
He prikede, as pryns yn pryde,  
Hys stede yn bothe syde,  
In earnest and yn game.  
The eldest brother gan bere  
To syr Lybeaus a spere,  
Syr Gower was hys name,  
But Lybeaus hym so nygh,  
That he brak hys thegh,  
And ever efte he was lame.

470

The knyght gronede for payne,  
Lybeaus wyth myght and mayne,  
Felde hym flat adownn;  
The dwerk Teondeleyn  
Tok the stede be the rayne,  
And lep ynto the arsoun:  
And rod hym also sket  
Ther that the mayde set,  
That was fayr of fasoun,  
Tho lough that mayde bryght,  
And seyde Thys yonge knyght,  
Ys chose for champyon.

480

The myddell brother com yerne,  
Upon a stede sterne,  
Egre as lyoun,  
Hym thoghte hys body wold berne,  
But he myght also yerne  
Fell Lybeaus adoun.

490



As werroure out of wytte,  
 Lybeaus on helm he smyt,  
 With a fell fachoun,  
 Hys strok so hard he set,  
 Thorgh helm and basnet,  
 That sword tochede hys croun.

500

Tho was Lybeaus agreved,  
 Whan he feld on hedde  
 That sword with egre mode,  
 Hys brond abowte he wevede,  
 All that he hyt he clevede,  
 As werroure wyld and wode.  
 Allas, he seyde tho,  
 Oon ayens two  
 To fyghte that ys good.  
 Wel faste they smyte to hym,  
 And he wyth strokes grym,  
 Well harde ayens hem stode.

510

Tho sawe these knyghtes,  
 They ne hadde no myghtes  
 To feghte ayens her fo.  
 To syr Lybeaus they gon up-yelde  
 Bothe har sperys and har schelde,  
 And mercy cryde hym tho.

Lybeaus answerede, Nay,  
 The ne askapeth so away,  
 Be god that schop mankende ;  
 Thou and thy brederen tway\*  
 Schull plyght her your fay,  
 To kyng Artour to wende ;  
 And sey, Lord of renounes,  
 As overcome and prysouns,  
 A knyght us hyder gan sende,  
 To dwelle yn your bandown,†  
 And yelde you tour and toun,  
 Ay wythouten ende.

520

530

\* Original reading : *tawayne*.† Original reading : *bandewon*.

And but ye wyllen tho so  
 Sertes y schall you slo,  
 Er than hyt be nyght;  
 The knyghtes sweren tho  
 They wolde to Artour go,  
 And trewes ther they plyght.  
 Thus departede day,  
 Lybeaus and that may,  
 As they hadden tyght;  
 Tyll the thyrde day  
 They ryde yn game and play,  
 He and that mayde bryght:

540

And ever they ryden west,  
 In that wylde forest,  
 Toward Synadowne;  
 They nyste what ham was best  
 Taken they wolde reste,  
 And myght not come to toun;  
 A logge they dyghte of leves,  
 In the grene greves,  
 With swordes bryght and brounc;  
 Therinne they dwellede all nyght,  
 He and that mayde bryght,  
 That was so fayr of fasoun;

550

And the dwerk gan wake,  
 For noo thef ne schuld take  
 Har hors away with gyle;  
 For drede he gan to quake,  
 For gret fer he sawe make  
 Thannes half a myle.  
 Arys, he seyde, yong knyght,  
 To horse that thou wer ydyght,  
 For dowte of peryle;  
 For i here greet bost,

560

And fer smelle rost,  
 Be god and seynt Gyle.  
 Lybeaus was stout and fer,  
 And lepte on hys destrer,  
 Hente schelde and spere;

570

And rod toward the fyer,  
 And whanne he nyghede ner,  
     Two geauntes he saw ther.  
 That on was red and lothlych,  
 And that other swart as pych,  
     Grysly bothe of chere ;  
 That oon held yn hys barme  
 A mayde yclepte yn hys arme,  
     As bryght as blole on brere.

The rede geaunt sterne 580  
 A wylde boor gan terne  
     Abowte upon a spyte ;  
 That fyer bryght gan berne,  
 The mayde cryde yerne  
     That som man schuld her ther wete :  
 And seyde, Wellaway !  
 That ever i bode thys day,  
     With two fendes to sette !  
 Now help, Marie mylde,  
 For love of thy chylde, 590  
     That y be naght foryette !

Than seyde Lybeaus, Be seynt Jame,  
 To save thys mayde fro schame  
     Hyt wer a fayr apryse ;  
 To fyght with bothe yn same  
 Hyt wer no chyldes game,  
     That beth so grymme and gryse.  
 He tok hys cours wyth schafte,  
 As knyght of kende crafte,  
     And rod be ryght asyse ; 600  
 The blake geaunt he smot smert,  
 Thorgh the lyver, longe, and herte,  
     That never he myghte aryse.

Tho flawe that mayde schene,  
 And thankede hevene quene,  
     That swych socour her sente ;  
 Tho com that mayde Elene,  
 Sche and her dwerk y mene,  
     And be the hond her hente ;



And ladde her ynto the greves,  
Into that logge of leves,  
Wyth well good talent ;  
And prayde swete Jhesus,  
Helpe Lybeaus desconus,  
That he wer nacht yschent.

610

The rede geaunt thore  
Smot to Lybeaus wyth the bore,  
As man that wold awede ;  
The strokes he sette so sore.  
That hys cursere therfore,  
Deed to grounde yede.  
Lybeaus was redy boun,  
And lepte out of the arsoun,  
As sperk thogh out of glede ;  
And egre as a lyoun,  
He faught wyth hys fachoun,  
To quite the geauntes mede.

620

The geaunt ever faught,  
And at the seconde draught,  
Hys spyte brak a two ;  
A tre yn honde he kaught,  
As a man that wer up-sawght  
To fyghte ayens hys fo.  
And wyth the ende of the tre  
He smot Lybeaus scheld a thre,  
And tho was Lybeaus well wo ;  
And er he eft the tre up haf,  
A strok Lybeaus hym yaf,  
Hys ryght arm fell hym fro.

630

The geaunt fell to grounde  
Lybeaus that ylke stounde  
Smot of hys hedde ryght  
Hym that he yaf er wounde  
In that ylke stounde,  
He servede so aplyght.  
He tok the heddes two,  
And yaf hem the mayden tho,  
That he hadde fore that fyght ;

640

The mayde was glad and blythe,  
 And thonkede god fele syde  
 That ever was he made knyght.

650

Then seyde Lybeaus, Gentyll dame,  
 Tell me what ys thy name,  
 And wher thou wer ybore.  
 Sche seyde, Be seynt Jame,  
 My fader ys of ryche name,  
 Woneth her before.

An erl, an hold hore knyght,  
 That hath be a man of myght,  
 Hys name ys syr Autore ;  
 Men clepeth me Vyolette,  
 For me these geauntes besette  
 Our castell full yore.

660

Yesterday yn the mornynge  
 Y wente on my playnge,  
 And noon evell ne thoughte,  
 The geauntes, wythout lesynge,  
 Out of a kave gonne sprynge,  
 And to thys fyre me brought.  
 Of hem y hedde ben yschent,  
 Ne god me socour hadde y sent,  
 That all thys world wrought ;  
 He yeldede thys good dede  
 That for us gan blede,  
 And wyth hys blod us bought.

670

Without any more talkynge  
 To horse they gon sprynge,  
 And ryde forth all yn same ;  
 He tolde the erl tydynge  
 How he wan yn fyghtynge  
 Hys chylde fram wo and schame.  
 The two heddes wer ysent  
 Artour the kyng to present,  
 With moche gle and game ;  
 Thanne ferst yn court aros  
 Lybeaus desconus los,  
 And hys gentyll fame.

680



The erl Autore also blyve  
Profrede hys doftyр hym to wyve,

Vyolette that may ;  
And kasteles ten and fyve  
And all after hys lyve

690

Hys lond to have for ay.  
Than seyde Lybeaus desconois,  
Be the love of swete Jhesus,

Naught wyve yet y ne may ;  
I have for to wende  
Wyth thys mayde so hende,  
And therefore have good day.

The erl, for hys good dede,  
Yaf hym ryche wede,

700

Scheld and armes brycht ;  
And also a noble stede,  
That doughty was of dede,

In batayle and yn fyght.  
They ryde forth all thre  
Toward the fayre cytè,

Kardevyle for soth hyt hyght ;  
Thanne sawe they yn a park  
A castell stout and stark,

710

That ryally was adyght.

Swych saw they never non,  
Imade of lyme and ston,

Ikarneled all abowte ;  
Oo, seyde Lybeaus, be seynt Jon,  
Her wer a wordly won

For man that wer yn dowte.  
Tho logh that mayde bryght,  
And seyde hyt owyth a knyght

The beste her abowte ;  
Ho that wyll wyth hym fyght,  
Be hyt be day other nyght,

720

He doth hym lowe lowte.

For love of hys lemman,  
That ys so fayr a woman,  
He hath do crye and grede ;



Ho that bryngeth a fayr yron,  
 A jerfaukon whyt as swan  
 He schall have to mede.  
 Yef sche ys nagent so bryght,  
 Wyth Gyffroun he mot fyght,  
 And ye may not spede ;  
 Hys hed schall of be raft,  
 And sette upon a sper schaft,  
 To se yn lengthe and brede.

730

And that thou mayst se full well  
 Ther stant yn ech a karnell  
 An hed other two upryght ;  
 Than seyde Lybeaus also snell,  
 Be god and seynt Mychell,  
 Wyth Gyffroun y schall fyght ;  
 And chalaunge the jerfawncon,  
 And sey that y have yn this toun,  
 A lemman to so bryght ;  
 And yef he her wyll se,  
 I wyll hym schewy the,  
 Be day other be nyght.

740

The dwerk seyde, Be Jhesus,  
 Gentyll Lybeaus desconus,  
 That wer a greet peryle,  
 Syr Gyffroun le flowdous  
 In fyghtyng he hath an us  
 Knyghtes to begyle.  
 Lybeaus answerede thar  
 Therof have thou no kar ;  
 Be god and be seynt Gyle,  
 I woll ysè hys face  
 Er y westward pace  
 From thys cyté a myle.

750

Wythoute a more resounce  
 They tok har [yn] the tounce,  
 And dwellede styll yn pese ;  
 A morn Lybeaus was boun  
 For to wynne renoun,  
 And ros, wythoute les :

760

And armede hym full sure.  
 In that selve armure  
     That erl Autores was ;  
 Hys stede he began stryde,  
 The dwerk rod hym besyde,  
     Toward that prowde palys. 770

Syr Gyffroun le fludous  
 Aros as was hys uus,  
     In the morn-tyde ;  
 And whan he com out of hys hous,  
 He saw Lybeaus desconus  
     Com prykynde as pryns yn pryde,  
 Wythoute a more abood  
 And ayens hym he rod,  
     And thus to hym he cryde, 780  
 Wyth voys that was schrylle ; \*  
 Comyst thou for good, other for ylle ?  
     Tell me, and naght me hyde.

Than seyde Lybeaus al so tyte,  
 For y have greet delyte  
     Wyth the for to fyght ;  
 For thou seyst greet despyte  
 That woman half so whyt,  
     As thy lemman be ne myght ;  
 And y have on yn toune, 790  
 Fayr of fassyoun,  
     In clothes whan sche ys dyght ;  
 Therfore thy gerfawcoun  
 To Artour the kyng wyth kroun  
     Bryng y schall wyth ryght.

Than seyde Gyffroun, Gentyll knyght,  
 How scholl we preve thys syght,  
     Whych of hem fayrer be ?  
 Lybeaus answerede aplyght,  
 In Cardevyle cyté ryght, 800  
     Ther ech man may hem se :

---

\* Original reading : *schylle*.

And bothe they schull be sette  
 A myddes the market,  
 To loke on bothe bond and fre ;  
 Yf my lemman ys broun,  
 To wynne the gerfawcoun  
 Fyghte y wyll wyth the.

Than seyde Gyfroun, al so snell,  
 To all thys y graunte well,  
 Thys day at underne-tyde ;  
 Be god and be seynt Mychell,  
 Out of thys castell  
 To Karlof i schall ryde.  
 Har gloves up they held,  
 In forward as y teld,  
 As princes prowde yn pryde ;  
 Syr Lybeaus al so snell  
 Rod hom to hys castell,  
 No lenger\* he nolde abyde ;

810

And commande mayde Elene,  
 As semelekest on to sene,  
 Buske her and make her boun :  
 " I say, be hevene quene,  
 Gyffrouns lemman schene  
 This day schall come to toun :  
 And bothe men you schall ysè,  
 A mydward the cytè,  
 Both body and fasoun ;  
 Yef thou be naght so bryght,  
 Wyth Gyffroun i mot fyght,  
 To wynne the Gerfawcoun."

820

830

Mayde Elene al so tyte,  
 In a robe of samyte  
 Anoon sche gan her tyre,  
 To tho Lybeaus profyte  
 In kevechers whyt,  
 Arayde wyth gold wyre.

---

\* Original reading : *leng*.



A velvvet mantyll gay,  
 Pelvred wyth gryns and gray,  
     Sche caste abowte her swyre,  
 A sercle upon her molde,  
 Of stones and of golde,  
     The best yn that enpyre.

840

Upon a pomely palfray  
 Lybeaus sette that may,  
     And ryden forth all thre ;  
 Thanne ech man gan to say,  
 Her cometh a lady gay,  
 And semelych on to se.  
 Into the market sche rode,  
 And hovede and abode,  
     A mydward the cytè ;  
 Than sygh they Gyffroun come ryde,  
 And two squyeres be hys syde,  
     Wythout a more mayné.

850

He bar the scheld of goules,  
 Of sylver thre whyte oules,  
     Of gold was the bordure,  
 Of the selve colours,  
 And of non other flowres,  
     Was lyngell and trappure.  
 Hys squyer gan lede  
 Before hym upon a stede  
     Thre schaftes good and sure ;  
 That other bar redy boun  
 The whyte gerfawcoun,  
     That leyd was to wajour.

860

After hym com ryde  
 A lady proud yn pryde,  
     Was clodeth yn purpel palle ;  
 That folk com fer and wyde  
 To se her bak and syde,  
     How gentyll sche was and small.  
 Her mantyll was rosyne,  
 Pelvred with ermyne,  
     Well ryche and reall ;

870

A sercle upon her molde,  
Of stones and of golde,  
Wyth many a juall.

As the rose her robe was red, 880  
The her schon on hyr heed,

As gold wyre schyneth bryght ;  
Ayder browe as selken threde,  
Abowte yn lengthe and yn brede,  
Hyr nose was strath and ryght.  
Her eyen gray as glas,  
Melk-whyt was her \* face,

So seyde that her sygh wyth syght ;  
Her swere long and small,  
Her beawte telle all 890  
No man wyth mouth ne myght.

Togedere men gon hem bryng  
A mydward the chepyng,  
Har beawte to dyscrye ;  
They seyde, olde and yenge,  
For soth wythoute lesyng,  
Betwene hem was partye.

Gyffrouns lemman ys clere  
As ys the rose yn erbere,  
For soth and naght to lye ; 900  
And Elene, the messengere,  
Semeth but a lavendere  
Of her norserye.

Than seyde Gyffroun le fludous,  
Syr Lybeaus desconus,  
Thys hauk thou hast forlore ;  
Than seyde Lybeaus desconus,  
Nay swych nas never myn uus,  
Justy y well therfore.

And yef thou berest me doun, 910  
Tak my heed the fawkoun,  
As forward was before ;

---

\* Original reading : *he*.

And yf y bere down the,  
The hauk schall wende wyth me,

Maugre thyn heed hore :  
What help mo tales told?  
They ryden yn to the feld,

And wyth ham greet partye ;  
Wyth coronals stef and stelde,  
Eyther smyt other in the schelde,

920

Wyth greet envye.  
Har saftes breke asonder,  
Har dentes ferthe as thonder,

That cometh out of the skye ;  
Taborus and trompours,  
Herawdes goode discoverours,\*

Har strokes gon descrye.

Syr Gyffroun gan to speke,  
Brenge a schaft that nell naght breke,

A schaft wyth a cornall ;  
Thys yonge ferly frek  
Ys yn hys sadell steke,

930

As stone yn castell wall.  
Thaugh he wer whyght werroure,  
As Alysander, other Artour,

Launcelot, other Percevale,  
I wyll do hym stoupe  
Over hys horses croupe,

And yeve hym evele fall.

The knyghtes bothe two,  
Togydere they ryden tho,  
With well greet raundoun ;

940

Lybeaus smot Gyffroun so,  
That hys scheld fell hym fro,  
In that feld adoun.

The lough all that ther wes,  
And seyde wythoute les,  
Duke, erl, and baroun,

That yet never they ne seygh  
Man that myghte dreygh  
To justy wyth Gyffroun.

950

---

\* Original reading : *discoverous*.



Gyffroun hys hors outryt,  
 And was wode out of wyt,  
     For he myghte naght spede ;  
 He rod agayn as tyd,  
 And Lybeaus so he smyt,  
     As man that wold awede.  
 But Lybeaus sat so faste,  
 That Gyffroun doun he caste,  
     Bothe hym and hys stede ;  
 Gyffrounys legge \* to-brak,  
 That men herde the krak,  
     Aboute yn lengthe and brede.

960

Tho seyde all tho that ther wore,  
 That Gyffroun hadde forlore,  
     The whyte gerfawkoun ;  
 To Lybeaus thay hym bore,  
 And wente, lasse and more,  
     Wyth hym ynto the toun.  
 Syr Gyffroun, upon hys scheld,  
 Was ybore hom fram the feld,  
     Wyth care and rufull roun ;  
 The gerfawkoun ysent was,  
 Be a knyght that hyght Gludas,  
     To Artour kyng wyth kroun.

970

And wryten all the dede  
 Wyth hym he gan lede,  
     The hauk how that he wan ;  
 Tho Artour herde hyt rede,  
 To hys knyghtes he seyde,  
     Lybeaus well werry-kan.  
 He hath me sent the valour  
 Of noble dedes four  
     Sethe he ferst began ;  
 Now wyll y sende hym tresour,  
 To spendy wyth honour,  
     As falleth for swych a man.

980

And hundred pound honest  
 Of floryns wyth the best  
     He sente to Cardelof than ;

990

---

\* Original reading : *regge*.

Tho Lybeaus helde hys feste,  
 That fourty dayes leste,  
 Of lordes of renoun.  
 Than Lybeaus and that may  
 Token hyr ryghte way  
 Toward Synadowne.  
 And fayre her lève token thay,  
 To wende ynto another contray,  
 Of duk, erl and baroun ;  
 As they ryden an a lowe,  
 Hornes herde they blowe,  
 Ther unther the doune ;

1000

And houndes ronne greet and smale,  
 Hontes grette yn the vale  
 The dwerke seyde that drowe  
 For to telle soth my tale,  
 Fele yeres ferely fale  
 That horn well y thede knowe.  
 Hym blowyth syr Otes de Lyle,  
 That servede my lady som whyle,  
 In her semyly sale,  
 Whanne he was take wyth gyle  
 He flawe for greet peryle  
 West ynto Wyrhale.

1010

As they ryde talkyng  
 A rach ther come flyngyng  
 Overtwert the way,  
 Thanne seyde old and yynge,\*  
 From her ferst gynnyng,  
 They ne sawe hond never so gay.  
 He was of all colours  
 That man may se of flours,  
 Betwene Mydsomer and May ;  
 That mayde sayde al so snell,  
 Ne saw y never no juell  
 So lykyng to my pay :

1020

---

\* Original reading : *ynge*.



God wold that y hym aughte !  
 Lybeaus anoon hym kaghte,  
     And yaf hym to mayde Elene ;  
 They ryden forth all yn saght, 1030  
 And tolde how knyghtes faght,  
     For ladyes bryght and schene.  
 Ne hadde they ryde but a whyle,  
 The mountance of a myle,  
     In that forest grene,  
 They sawe an hynde com styke,  
 And two grehoundes ylyke,  
     Be that rech that y er of mene.

They hovede unther a lynde,  
 To se the cours of the hynde, 1040  
     Lybeaus and hys fere ;  
 Thanne seygh they come byhynde  
 A knyght iclodeth yn\* Ynde,  
     Upon a bay destrere.  
 Hys bugle he gan to blowe,  
 For hys folk hyt schuld knowe  
     In what stede he wer ;  
 He seyde to hem that throwe,  
 Syr, that rach was myn owe,  
     Ygon for sevene yere : 1050

Frendes, leteth hym go.  
 Lybeaus answerede tho,  
     That schall never betyde,  
 For wyth myn handes two  
 I hym yaf that mayde me fro  
     That hoveth me besyde.  
 Tho seyde ser Otes de Lyle,  
 Than artow yn peryle,  
     Byker yef thou abyde.  
 Tho seyde Lybeaus, Be seynt Gyle, 1060  
 I ne yeve naght of thy gyle,  
     Cherll, though thou chyde.

---

\* Original reading : y.



Then seyde syr Otes de Lyle,  
Syr, thyn wordes beth fyle,  
    Cherll was never my name ;  
My fader an erll was whyle,  
The countesse of Karlyle  
    Certes was my dame.  
Wer ych yarmed now,  
Redy as art thou,  
    We wolde feyghte yn same ;  
But thou the rach me leve,  
Thou pleyyst, er hyt be eve,  
    A wonder wylde game.

1070

Tho seyde Lybeaus also prest,  
Therof tho thy best,  
    Thys rach schall wyth me wende.  
They tok har way ryght west,  
In that wylde forest,  
    Ryght as the dwerk hem kende.  
The lord wyth greet errour  
Rod hom to hys tour,  
    And after hys frendes sende,  
And tolde hem anon ryghtes  
That on of Artourys knyghtes  
    Schamelych gan hym schende ;

1080

And hadde hys rach ynome.  
Thanne seyde alle and some,  
    The traytour schall be take,  
And never ayen hom come,  
Thaugh he wer thoghtyer gome,  
    Than Launcelet du Lake.  
Tho dyghte they hem all to armes,  
Wyth swerdes and wyth gysarmes,  
    As werre schold awake ;  
Knytes and squyeres,  
Lepte on her destrerys,  
    For har lordes sake.

1090

Upon an hell well hyghe  
Lybeaus ther they syghe,  
    He rod pas be pas ;

1100

To hym they gon crye,  
 Traytour, thou schalt dye,  
     For thy wykkede trespas.  
 Syr Lybeaus ayen beheld  
 How fulfelde was the feld,  
     So greet peple ther was ;  
 He seyde, Mayde Elene,  
 For our rach, y wene,  
     Us cometh a karfull cas.

1110

I rede that ye drawe  
 Into the wode schawe,  
     Your heddes for to hyde ;  
 For I am swyde fawe,  
 Though ych schulde be slawe,  
     Bykere of hem y woll abyde.  
 Into the wode they rode,  
 And Lybeaus theroute abothe,  
     As aunterous knyght yn pryde ;  
 Wyth bowe, and wyth arblaste,  
 To hym they schote faste,  
     And made hym woundes wyde.

1120

Lybeaus stede ran,  
 And bar down hors and man,  
     For nothyng nolde he \* spare ;  
 That peple seyde than,  
 Thys ys fend Satan,  
     That mankende wyll forfare.  
 For wham Lybeaus arafte  
 After hys ferste drawghte  
     He slep for evermare :  
 But sone he was besette  
 As theer ys yn a nette  
     Wyth grymly wondes sare.

1130

Twelf knyghtes all prest  
 He saw come yn the forest,  
     In armes cler and bryght ;

---

\* Original reading : *her*.



Al day they hadde yrest,  
 And thought\* yn that forest,  
 To sle Lybeaus the knyght. 1140  
 Of sute were all twelfe,  
 That on was the lord hymselfe,  
 In ryme to rede aryght ;  
 They smyte to hym all at ones,  
 And thoghte to breke hys bones,  
 And felle hym doun yn fyght.

Tho myghte men her dyngre,  
 And swordes lowde rynge,  
 Among hem all yn fere ;  
 So harde they gonne thrynge, 1150  
 The sparkes gonne out sprynge,  
 Fram scheld and helmes clere.  
 Lybeaus slough of hem thre,  
 And the fourth gonne to fle,  
 And thorst naght nyghhe hym nere,  
 The lord dwellede yn that schour,  
 And hys sones four,  
 To selle har lyves there.

Ther rounne tho rappes ryve,  
 He ayens hem fyve, 1160  
 Faught as he were wod ;  
 Neygh doun they gonne hym dryve,  
 As water doth of clyve,  
 Of hym ran the blode.  
 As he was neygh yspylt,  
 Hys swerd brast yn the hylt,  
 Tho was he mad of mode ;  
 The lord a strok hym sette,  
 Through † helm and basnette,  
 That yn the scheld hyt stode. 1170

Aswogh he fell adoun,  
 And hys hynder arsoun,  
 As man that was mate ;

---

\* Original reading : *though*.

† Original reading : *though*.



Hys fomen were well boun,  
 To perce hys acketoun,  
     Gypell, mayl, and plate.  
 As he gan sore smerte,  
 Up he pullede hys herte,  
     And keverede of hys state;  
 An ex he hente all boun,  
 At hys hynder arsoun,  
     Allmest hym thoughte to late.

1180

Than besterede he hym as a knygh,  
 Thre stedes heoddes down ryght,  
     He smot at strokes thre;  
 The lord saw that syght,  
 And on hys courser lyght,  
     Away he gan to fle,  
 Lybeaus no lenger abode,  
 But aftyr hym he rode,  
     And unther a chesteyn tre,  
 Ther he hadde hym quelthe,  
 But the lord hym yelde,  
     At hys wylle to be.

1190

And be sertayne extente  
 Tresour, lond, and rente,  
     Castell, halle, and bour,  
 Lybeaus therto consente  
 In forward \* that he wente  
     To the kyng Artour,  
 And seye, Lord of renoun,  
 As overcome and prysoun  
     Y am to thyne honour.  
 The lord grauntede to hys wylle  
 Bothe lowthe and style,  
     And ledde hym to hys bour.

1200

Anoon that mayde Elene,  
 Wyth gentyll men fyftene  
     Was fet to that castell

---

† Original reading: *soward*.

Sche and the dwerke bydene 1210  
Tolde dedes kene

Of Lybeaus how hyt fell.  
Swyche presentes four  
He hadde ysent kyng Artour,  
That he wan fayr and well;  
The lord was glad and blythe,  
And thonketh fele syde  
God and seynt Mychell.

Now reste we her awhyle  
Of syr Otes de Lyle, 1220

And telle we other tales.  
Lybeaus rod many a myle,  
Among aventurus fyle,  
In Yrland and yn Wales.

Hyт befell yn the month of June, 1225  
Whan the fenell hangeth yn toun,

Grene yn semely sales,  
Thys somerys day ys long,  
Mery ys the fowles song,  
As \* notes of the nyghtyngales. 1230

That tyme Lybeaus com ryde,  
Be a ryver syde,

And saw a greet cytè,  
Wyth palys prowd yn pryde,  
And castelles heygh and wyde, 1235

Wyth gates greet plentè.  
He axede what hyt hyght.  
The mayde seyde anon ryght,

Syr, y telle hyt the,  
Men clepeth hyt Yledor,† 1240  
Her hath be fyghtyng more  
Thanne owher yn any countre.

For a lady of prys,  
Wyth rode rede as rose on ryse,  
Thys countre ys yn dowte ; 1245

\* Original reading: *A*.

† *L'isle d'or*, the Isle of Gold, or Golden Island ; but whether designed for French or English seems rather doubtful.



A geaunt hatte Maugys,  
 Nowher hys per ther nys,  
 Her hathe be leyde abowte.  
 He ys blak as ony pych.  
 Nower ther ys non swych, 1250  
 Of dede sterne and stoute ;  
 Ho that passeth the bregge  
 Hys armes he mot legge,  
 And to the geaunt alowte.

Tho seyde Lybeaus, Mayde hende,  
 Schold y wonde to wende,  
 For hys dentys ille ;  
 Yf god me grace sende,  
 Er thys day come to ende, 1260  
 Wyth fyght y schall hym spylle.  
 I have yseyn grete okes  
 Falle for wyndes strokes,  
 The smale han stonde styll ;  
 They y be yyng and lyte,  
 To hym yyt wyll y smyte  
 Do god all hys wyll.

They ryden forth all thre  
 Toward that fayre cytè,  
 Me clepeth hyt Ylledore ;  
 Maugeys they gonne ysè. 1270  
 Upon the bregge of tre,  
 Bold as wylde bore.  
 Hys scheld as blakke as pych,  
 Lyngell armes trappur was swych,  
 Thre mammettes therynne wore,  
 Of gold gaylyth ygeld,  
 A schafte an honde he held,  
 And oo scheld hym before.

He cryde to hym yn despyte,  
 Say, thou felaw yn whyt, 1280  
 Tell me what art thou,  
 Torne hom agayn all so tyt,  
 For thy owene profyt,  
 Yef thou lovede thy prow.



Lybeaus seyde anoon ryght,  
 Artour made me knyght,  
 To hym i made a vow,  
 That y ne schulde never turne bak,  
 Therfore, thou devell yn blak,  
 Make the redy now.

1290

Syr Lybeaus and Maugys,  
 On stedes prowde of prys,  
 Togedere ryde full ryght;  
 Bothe lardes and ladyes  
 Leyn out yn pomet touris\*  
 To se that sely fyght;  
 And prayde wyth good wyll,  
 Bothe lode and styll,  
 Helpe Lybeaus the knyght;  
 And that fyle geaunt,  
 That levede yn Termagaunt,†  
 That day to deye yn fyght.

1300

\* Original reading: *tours*. The poet certainly intended a rhyme, if ever so bad.

† So, afterward, in the *King of Tars*:—

“Of Tirmagaunt and of Mahoun.”

“TERMAGAUNT,” says Dr. Percy, “is the name given in the old romances to the god of the Saracens: in which he is constantly linked with MAHOUND or Mahomet.” (i, 76.) “This word,” he adds, “is derived by the very learned editor of Junius from the Anglo-Saxon Tyr, very, and Mazan, mighty. As this word had so sublime a derivation, and was so applicable to the true god, how shall we account for its being so degraded? Perhaps Tyr-mazan or *Termagant* had been a name originally given to some Saxon idol, before our ancestors were converted to christianity; or had been the peculiar attribute of one of their false deities; and therefore the first christian missionaries rejected it as profane and improper to be implied [*r.* applied] to the true god. Afterwards, when the irruptions of the Saracens into Europe, and the Crusades into the east, had brought them acquainted with a new species of unbelievers, our ignorant ancestors, who thought all that did not receive the christian law were necessarily pagans and idolaters, supposed the Mahometan creed was in all respects the same with that of their pagan forefathers, and therefore made no scruple to give the ancient name of *Termagant* to the god of the Saracens: just in the same manner as they afterwards used the name of *Saracen* to express any kind of pagan idolater.” (77.) “I cannot,” says he, afterward, “conclude this short memoir, without observing that the French romancers, who had borrowed the word Termagant from us, and applied it as we in their old romances, corrupted it into Tervagaunte. This may be added to the other proofs adduced in these volumes of the great intercourse that formerly sub-

Har scheldes brooke asonder,  
 Har dentes ferd as donder,  
 The pecces gonne out sprynge ;  
 Ech man hadde wonder  
 That Lybeaus ne hadde ybe unther,  
 At the first gynnyng.

sisted between the old minstrels and legendary writers of both nations, and that they mutually borrowed each others romances" (78.) In a note, at p. 379, he, likewise observes that "the old French romancers, who had corrupted TERMAGANT into TERVAGANT, couple it with the name of Mahomet as constantly as ours. As TERMAGANT," he says, "is evidently of Anglo-Saxon derivation, and can only be explained from the elements of that language, its being corrupted by the old French romancers proves that they borrowed some things from ours." In another note (III., xxii), in order to support his hypothesis, that "The stories of king Arthur and his round table, of Guy and Bevis, with some others, were probably the invention of English minstrels," he has the following words: "That the French romancers borrowed some things from the English, appears from the word TERMAGANT, which they took up from our minstrels, and corrupted into TERVAGAUNTE. . . . What is singular, Chaucer, who was most conversant with the French poets, adopts their corruption of this word.—See TYRWHITT'S EDIT."

In this pursuit the venerable prelate (though he might not be one at that time) has suffered himself to be misled by an *ignis fatuus*. All that he has said, about Tyr-Mazan, or *Termagant* being the name of a Saxon deity, remains to be proved. The learned editor of Junius imposed upon him: the combination Tyr Mazan, is not to be found even in his own Saxon dictionary, neither, according to that authority, is Tyr, very; and maza, not mazan, is mighty: and, after all, this is only in effect the *ter-magnus* of former etymologists. As little foundation is there for supposing that the French romancers not only borrowed the word *Termagant* from the English, but, likewise, corrupted it into TERVAGAUNTE: which is contrary to every authenticated fact. The English romancers not only servilely followed the French, but even themselves corrupted the word TERVAGANTE, after they had got it. This corruption, however, must have taken place before the time of Chaucer, who, notwithstanding what Dr. P. has asserted, even in Mr. Tyrwhitt's edition, gives the English corruption, and not the French original:—

"He sayde, Child, by TERMAGAUNT."

(II. 235; and see IV., 318.)

A much greater mistake than the present editor made, by inadvertently quoting his own book, by which the worthy doctor (forgetful of his own hallucinations) was pleased to say "all confidence [had] been destroyed."

But, in the *King of Tars*, a romance, in all probability, anterior to Chaucer's time, as preserved in the Edinburgh MS. we find—

"Be Mahoun and TERVAGANT :"

and had we more copies of that age, we should, doubtless, recover many other instances of the word; as, in fact, there may be in that identical MS.

With respect to the etymology of the original name TERVAGANTE (for it is perfectly ridiculous to seek for that of the corruption *Termagant*), it may, possibly, be referred to the two Latin words *ter* and *vagans*, i.e., the action of going

Thanne drough dey swordes bothe,  
 As men that weren wrothe, 1310  
 And gonne togedere dyng; ;  
 Lybeaus smot Maugys so,  
 That hys scheld fell hym fro,  
 And yn to the feld gan flynge.

Maugys was queynte and quede,  
 And smot of the stedes heed,  
 That all fell out the brayne ;

or turning thrice round, a very ancient ceremony in magical incantation. Thus Medea, in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* (L. 7, V. 189):—

“*Ter se convertit ; ter sumtis flumine crinem  
 Erravit aquis ; ternis ululatus ora  
 Solvit.*”

“She turned her thrice about, as oft she thr ew  
 On her pale tresses the nocturnal dew,  
 Then yelling thrice, &c.”

*Vago*, indeed, in pure Latin, means to wander, but, in barbarous times, the classical sense of a word was not much regarded : of this, however, one cannot be confident. Tir, or Tyr, in Saxon, and the ancient Cimbric, was the name of Odin, or some other northern deity, and, metonymically, any great leader, prince, lord, or emperor ; and is occasionally applied, in composition, to God, the Creator. See Lye's Dictionary, and Hickes's *Thesaurus*. But, admitting *Tervagante* or *Termagant* to have some connection with the Saxon or Cimbric term, it will, by no means, prove that we did not obtain the word from the French, whose language, every one knows, was as much a dialect of the ancient Cimbric as that of the Anglo-Saxon. The word *three* had some mystic signification with the ancients :—

“*Tergeminamque Hecaten, tria virginis ora Dianæ.*” VIR. Æ. IV.

*Termagant*, therefore, has been corrupted, by the English, from *Tervagant*, precisely in the same manner as we have corrupted *cormorant* from *corvorant*, and *malmsey* from *malvesie*. The Italian poets have it *Trivigante*. Thus Ariosto :—

“*Bestemmiando Macone, e Trivigante.*”

It, likewise, occurs in the *Gierusalemme liberata* of Tasso. They, too, doubtless, were indebted for it to the French.

\*\*\* King Herod, in the Coventry *Corpus Christi* play, constantly swears by Mahomet, but never by *Termagant*. So in fo. 173 :

“Now be Mahound, my god of grace.”

One of the soldiers, who are set to watch the sepulchre, calls him “Seynt Mahownde.”

“*Tervagant, l'un des dieux prétendus des Mahométans,*” is a character in “*Le jeu de S. Nicolas,*” a very ancient French mystery (see *Fabliaux ou contes*, II., 131) ; but no such personage, or even name, occurs in any English mystery or morality now extant, or of which we have any account ; though, from the following passage, in Bale's *Acts of English Votaries*, it would seem that some such character had, in his time, been known to the stage :—

“Grennyng upon her, lyke *Termagautes* in a play.”



The stede fell dounc deed,  
 Lybeaus nothyng ne sede,  
     Bot start hym up agayn. 1320  
 An ax he hente boun,  
 That heng at hys arsoune,  
     And smot a strok of mayn;  
 Thorough Maugys stedes swyre,  
 And forkarf bon and lyre,  
     That heed fell yn the playn.

Afote they gonne to fyghte,  
 As men that wer of myghte,  
     The strokes betwene hem two  
 Descryve no man ne myghte, 1330  
 For they wer unsyght,  
     And eyder othres fo.  
 Fram the our of pryme\*  
 Tyll hyt was evesong tyme  
     To fyghte they wer well thro; 1335  
 Syr Lybeaus durstede sore,  
 ( And seyde Maugys thyn ore,†  
     To drynke lette me go :

\* It was customary with the Christian kings, knights, and soldiers, to cease fighting at evensong or vespers, observed at six o'clock. Thus, in the ancient Catalan romance of *Tirant lo Blanch*, Barcelona, 1497, folio, it is said, "*E continuant tostemps la batailla era ja quasi hora de vespres, &c.*" So, likewise, in the *Histoire de Guerin de Montglave*, Lyons, 1585, 8vo, "*E maintint la guerre jusques à l'heure de vespres.*" In the old Ballad of *The Hunts of Cheviat* :—

"When even-song bell was rang, the battell was nat half done ;"

and it became sinful, of course, to fight any longer. The same circumstance is thus noticed in the more modern ballad of *Chevy-Chase* :—

"The fight did last, from break of day,  
 Till setting of the sun ;  
 For, when they rung the evening-bell,  
 The battle scarce was done."

Dr. Percy has confounded the *vesper bell* with the *curfew*. The reason of this temporary cessation of bloodshed, proceeded from respect to the Virgin Mary ; for, at this hour, the angelical salutation was sung ; whence it was sometimes called the *Ave Maria* bell. It is still customary, upon the Spanish stage, for the actors, in the midst of the grossest and most indecent buffoonery, to fall down on their knees, and pull out their beads, at the sound of this bell.

† Thus, in Chaucer's *Millere's Tale*, V. 3724 :

"Lemman, thy grace, and, swete bird, *thyn ore*."

In the learned editor's note on this passage he explains *ore* to signify "*grace*,

And y schall graunte the  
What bone thou bydest me, 1340

Swych cas yef that be tyt ;

Greet schame hyt wold be

( For durste a knyght to sle, —

And no mare profyt.

Maugys grauntede hys wyll, 1345

To drynke all hys fyll,

Wythout any despyte ;

As Lybeaus ley on the bank,

And thorough hes helm he drank,

Maugys a strok hym smyt. 1350

That yn the ryuer he fell,

Hys armes echadell,

Was weet and evell adyght ;

But up he start snell,

And seyde, Be seynt Mychell, 1355

Now am y two so lyght.

What wendest thou, fendes fere ?

Uncrystenede that were

Tyll y saw the wyth syght ;

I schall for thys baptyse 1360

Ryght well quyte thy servyse,

Thorough grace of god almight.

---

*favour, protection :*" and cites, as 'an additional instance, in support of that explanation, the present text, "where," he says, "*thyne ore* must be understood to mean *with thy favour*, as in this passage of Chaucer."

The same phrase occurs frequently in *Syr Bevy's*, though not precisely, at least, in every instance, with Mr. Tyrwhitt's signification :—

"She saide, Bevy's, lemman, *thyn ore*,

Thou art wounded wonder sore."

"Mercy, saide Bradmodde, *thyn ore*."

"There is no man, by goddys *ore*."

"Then sayd Bevy's, for Crystes *ore*."

Thus, likewise, Robert of Gloucester, P. 39 :—

"The maister fel adoun on kne, and criede *mercy* and *ore*."

Again :—

"Therefore the erl of Kent he bysought *milc* and *ore*."

Again, in *The erl of Toulous*, V. 583 :—

"Y aske *mercy* for goddys *ore*,"

Thanne newe fyght they began,  
 Eyther tyll other ran,  
 And delede dentes strong ;  
 Many a gentylman,  
 And ladyes whyt as swan,  
 For Lybeaus handes wrong.  
 For Maugys yn the feld  
 Forkarf Lybeaus scheld,  
 Wyth dente of armes long ;  
 Thanne Lybeaus ran away,  
 Ther that Maugys scheld lay,  
 And up he gan hyt fonge.

1370

And ran agayn to hym  
 Wyth strokes stout and grym,  
 Togydere they gonne asayle,  
 Besyde that ryver brym  
 Tyll hyt darkede dym  
 Betwene hem was batayle.  
 Lybeaus was werroure wyght,  
 And smot a strok of myght,  
 Thorugh gypell, plate, and mayll ;  
 Forthwyth the scholder bon  
 Maugys arm fyll of anoon,  
 Into the feld saunz fayle.

1380

The geaunt thys gan se  
 Islawe that he schulde be,  
 And flaugh wyth myght and mayn.  
 Lybeaus after gan fle,  
 Wyth sterne strokes thre,  
 And smot hys back atweyn.  
 The geaunt ther beleveth  
 Lybeaus smot of hys heved,  
 And of the batayle was fayn.  
 He wente ynto the toun  
 Wyth fayr processioune,  
 That folk com hym agayn.

1390

4315

( A lady, whyt as flowr,  
 That hyghte *la dame d'amore*,  
 A feng hym fayr and well ;

1400



And thanked hys honour,  
 That he was her socour,  
     Ayens the geaunt so fell.  
 To chambre sche gan hym lede,  
 And dede of all hys wede,  
     And clodede hym yn pell ;  
 And proferede hym wyth word  
 For to be her lord,  
     In cyté and castell.

1410

Lybeaus grauntede yn haste,  
 And love to her he caste,  
     For sche was bryght and schene ;  
 Alas he ne hadde ybe chast !  
 For aftyrward at last,  
     Sche dede hym greet tene.  
 For twelf monthe and more  
 Lybeaus dwellede thore,  
     And mayde Elene ;  
 That never he myghte out-breke,  
 For to help a wreke  
     Of Synadowne the quene.

1420

For thys fayr lady\*  
 Kowthe moch of sorcery,  
     More then other wycches fyfe ;  
 Sche made hym melodye,  
 Of all manere menstracy,  
     That man myghte descryve.  
 Whan he seygh her face,  
 Hym thought he was  
     In Paradys alyve ;  
 Wyth fantasme, and fayrye,  
 Thus sche blerede hys yye,  
     That evell mot sche thryve.

1425

1430

Tyll hyt fell on a day,  
 He mette Elene that may,  
     Wythinne the castell tour ;

1435

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\* This lady bears a strong resemblance to the no less magical than beauteous fairies, the Calypso of Homer, and the Alcina of Ariosto ; both of whom deluded and detained Ulysses and Rogero in the manner *la dame d'amour* here treats Lybeaus.

To hym sche gan to say,  
Syr knyght, thou art fals of fay,  
Ayens the king Artour. 1440  
For love of a woman,  
That of sorcery kan,  
Thou doost greet dyshonour;  
The lady of Synadowne  
Longe lyght in prisoun,  
And that is greet dolour.

Lybeaus herd her so speke,  
Hym thought hys hert wold breke,  
For sorow and for schame;  
And at a posterne unsteke 1450  
Lybeaus gan out-breke  
Fram that gentyll dame;  
And tok wyth hym hys stede,  
Hys scheld, and hys ryche wede,  
And ryde forth all ysame;  
Her styward stout and sterne,  
He made hys squyere,  
Gyfflet was hys name:

And ryde, as fast as they may,  
Forth yn her jorney, 1460  
On stedes bay and browne;  
Upon the thyrdde thay  
They saw a cyté gay,  
Me clepeth hyt Synadowne.  
Wyth castell heygh and wyde,  
And palys prowde yn pryde,  
Werk of fayr fassoune;  
But Lybeaus desconus  
He hadde wonder of an uus  
That he saw do yn toune. 1470

For gore, and fen, and full wast,  
That was out ykast,  
Togydere they gaderede y wys;  
Lybeaus axede yn hast,  
Tell me, mayde chast,  
What amounteth thys.



They taketh all that hore,  
 That er was out ybore,  
 Me thyngeth they don a mys.  
 Thanne seyde mayde Elene, 1480  
 Syr, wythouten wene,  
 I schalle the telle how yt ys.

No knyght for nessche ne hard,  
 They he schold be forfard,  
 Ne geteth her non ostell,  
 For love of a styward,  
 Men clepeth hym syr Lambard,  
 Constable of thys castell.  
 Ryde to that est gate,  
 And axede thyn in therate, 1490  
 Bothe fayre and well ;  
 And er he bete thy nede,  
 Justes he wyll the bede,  
 By god and seynt Mychell.

And yf he beryth the doun,  
 Hys trompys schull be boun,  
 Har bemes for to blowe ;  
 And thoroughout Synadowne,  
 Bothe maydenes, and garssoun,  
 Fowyll fen schull on the throwe : 1500  
 And thanne to thy lyves ende,  
 In whett stede that thow wende,  
 For coward werst thou knowe,  
 And thus may kyng Artour  
 Lese hys honour,  
 Thorough thy dede slowe.

Than seyde Lybeaus al so tyt,  
 That wer a greet dyspyt,  
 For any man alyve ;  
 To tho Artour profyt, 1510  
 And make the lady quyt,  
 To hym y wyll dryve.  
 Syr Gyfflette, make the yare !—  
 Thyder we wyllyth fare,  
 Hastely and blyve.



They ryde thy ryght gate,  
 Even to the castell-yate,  
 Wyth fayre schaftes fyfe.

And at the fayr castell  
 They axede her ostell, 1520

For aunterous knyghtes ;  
 The porter, fayre and well,  
 Lette ham yn al so snell,

And axede anon ryghtes :  
 Ho ys yowre governowre ?  
 They seyde, Kyng Artour,

That ys man most of myghtes ;  
 And welle of curtesye,  
 And flour of chyvalrye,

To felle hys son yn fyghtes. 1530

The porter profytable,  
 To hys lord the constable

Thus hys tale tolde,  
 And wythoute fable,  
 Syr, of the rownde table

Beth come knyghtes bolde ;  
 That beth armed sure,  
 In rose-reed armure,

Wyth thre lyouns of gold ;  
 Lambard therof was fayn, 1540  
 And swore oth certayn.

Wyth hem juste he wolde.

And bad hem make yare,  
 Into the feld to fare,

Wythoute the castell gate ;  
 The porter nold naght spare,  
 As grehound doth the hare,

To ham he ran full wate  
 And seyde anon ryghtes,  
 Ye aunterous knyghtes, 1550

For nothyng ye ne late ;  
 Loketh your scheldes be strong,  
 Your schaftes good and long,  
 Your saket and faunplate.

And rydeth ynto the feld,  
My lord, wyth sper and scheld,  
Cometh wyth yow to play.

Lybeaus spak wordes bold,  
That ys a tale ytold,

Well lykyng unto my pay. 1560

Into the felde they ryde,  
And hovede and abyde,

As best broght to bay ;

The lord of sente hys stede,

Hys scheld, hys ryche wede,

Hys atyre was stout and gay.

Hys scheld was of gold fyn,  
The bores heddes therinne,

As blak as brond ybrent ;

The bordur of ermyne,

Nas non so queynte of gyn,

From Karlell ynto Kent. 1570

And of the same paynture

Was lyngell and trappure

Iwroght well fayre and gent ;

Hys schaft was strong wythall,

Theron a stef coronall,

To dely doghty dent.

And whane that stout styward,

That hyghte syr Lambard,

Was armede at all ryghtes,

He rood to the feld ward,

Lyght as a lybard,

Ther hym abyde the knyghtes. 1580

He smote his schaft yn grate,

Almost hym thought\* to late,

Whanne he seygh hem wyth syghte ;

Lybeaus rood to hym thare,

Wyth a schaft all square,

As man most of myghte. 1590

---

\* Original reading : *Though*.

Eyther smot other yn the scheld,  
 The peces fell ynto the feld,  
     Of her schaftes schene ;  
 All tho that hyt beheld,  
 Ech man to other teld,  
     The yonge knyghte ys kene.  
 Lambard was aschamed sore,  
 So nas he never yn feld before,  
     To wyte and naht to wene ;  
 He cryde, Do come a stranger schaft,  
 Yyf Artours knyght kan craft,  
     Now hyt schall be sene.

1600

Tho he tok a schaft rounde,  
 Wyth cornall scharp ygrounde,  
     And ryde be ryght resoun ;  
 Ayder provede yn that stounde  
 To yeve other dedys wounde,  
     Wyth fell herte as lyoun.  
 Lambard smot Lybeaus so  
 That hys scheld fell hym fro,  
     Into the feld adoun ;  
 So harde he hym hytte,  
 Unnethe that he myghte sytte  
     Upryght yn hys arsoun.

1610

Hys schaft brak wyth gret power,  
 Lybeaus hytte Lambard yn the launcer  
     Of hys helm so bryght ;  
 That pysane, aventayle, and gorgere,  
 Fell ynto the felld fer,  
     And syr Lambard upryght  
 Sat, and rokkede yn hys sadell,  
 As chyld doth yn a kradell,  
     Wythoute mannys myght ;  
 Ech man tok other be the hod,  
 And gonne for to herye good  
     Borgays, baroun, and knyght.

1620

Ayen to ryde Lambard thought,  
 Another helm hym was brought,  
     And a schaft unmete ;



Whan they togydere mette, 1630  
 Ayder yn other scheld hytte,  
     Strokes grymly greete.  
 Syr Lambardys schaft to-brast,  
 And syr Lybeaus sat so faste  
     In sadelys as they setten,  
 That the styward, syr Lambard,  
 Fell of hys stede bakward,  
     So harde they two metten.

Syr Lambard was aschamed sore,  
 Than seyde Lybeaus, Wyltow more? 1640  
     And he answerede, Nay ;  
 Never seythe y was ybore,  
 Ne sygh ycome her before  
     So redy a knyght to my pay.  
 A thogth y have myn herte wythinne,  
 That thou art com of Gawenys kynne,  
     That ys so stout and gay ;  
 Yef thou schalt for my lady fyght,  
 Well come to me, syr, thou knyght,  
     In love and sykyr fay. 1650

Lybeaus answerede sykyrly,  
 Feyghte y schall for a lady,  
     Be heste of kyng Artour ;  
 But y not wherfore ne why,  
 Ne who her doth swych vylany,  
     Ne what ys her dolour.  
 A mayde, that ys her messengere,  
 And a dwerke me brought her,  
     Her to do socour ;  
 The constable seyde, Well founde 1660  
 Noble knyght of the table rounde,  
     Iblessed be seynt Savour.

Anon that mayde Elene  
 Was fette wyth knyghtes ten,  
     Before syr Lambard ;

Sche and the dwerk y mene  
 Tolde seven dedes kene,  
 That he dede dydyrward ;  
 And how that syr Lybeaus  
 Faught wyth fele schrewys,  
 And for no deth ne spared ;  
 Lambard was glad and blythe,  
 And thonkede fele syde,  
 God and seynt Edward.

1670

Anon, wyth mylde chere,  
 They sete to the sopere,  
 Wyth moch gle and game ;  
 Lambard and Lybeaus, yn fere,  
 Of aventurs that ther wer,  
 Talkede bothe yn same.  
 Than seyde Lybeaus, syr Constable,  
 Tell me wythout fable,  
 What ys the knyghtes name,  
 That halt so yn prisoun  
 The lady of Synadowne,  
 That ys so gentyll a dame.

1680

“Nay, syr, knyght ys he non,  
 Be god and be seynt Jon,  
 That dorst away her lede ;  
 Two clerkes beth her fon,  
 Well fals of flessch and bon,  
 That haveth ydo thys dede.  
 Hyt beth men of maystrye,  
 Clerkes of nygremansye,  
 Hare artes for to rede ;  
 Syr Maboun hatte that other,  
 And syr Irayn hys brother,  
 For wham we beth yn drede.

1690

Thys Yrayn and Maboun  
 Have imade of our toun  
 A palyz queynte of gynne ;  
 Ther nys knyght ne baroun,  
 Wyth herte harde as lyoun,  
 That thorste come therinne.

1700



Thys\* ys be nygremauncye,  
 Ymaketh of fayrye,  
     No man may hyt wynne;  
 Therinne ys yn prysoun,  
 The lady of Synadowne,  
     Ys come of knyghtes kynne.

1710

Ofte we hereth hyr crye,  
 But her to se wyth eye  
     Therto have we no myghte;  
 They doth her turmentrye,  
 And all vylanye,  
     Be dayes and be nyght.  
 Thys Maboun and Irayn  
 Haveth swor deth certayn,  
     To dethe they wyll her dyghte;  
 But sche graunte hym tylle  
 To do Mabounys wyll,  
     And yeve hem all her ryght.

1720

Of alle thys dukdom feyr  
 That ylke ladyys eyr;  
     And come of knyghtes kenne;  
 Sche ys meke and boneyre,  
 Therefore we beth in despeyre,  
     That sche be dyght to synne.  
 Than seyde Lybeaus desconus,  
 Be the grace of Jhesus,  
     That lady y schall wynne  
 Of Maboun and Yrayn;  
 Schame i schall, certayne,  
     Hem bothe wythout and wythinne.

1730

Tho toke they har reste,  
 In lykyng as hem leste,  
     In the castell that nyght;

---

\* Original reading: *hys*.



A morow Lybeaus hym prest  
 In armes that wer best  
 And fressch he was to fyght. 1740  
 Lambard ladde hym forth well whate,  
 And broghte hym at the castell gate,  
 And fond hyt open ryght,  
 No ferther ne dorste hym brynge,  
 For soth wythout lesynge,  
 Erll, baroun, ne knyght.

But turnede hom agayn,  
 Save syr Gylet hys swayn  
 Wolde wyth hym ryde ; 1750  
 He swor his oth serteyn,  
 He wold se hare brayn,  
 Yf they hym wold abyde.  
 To the castell he rod  
 And hovede and abod,  
 To Jhesu bad and tolde,  
 To sende hym tydynge glad  
 Of ham that longe had  
 That lady yn prysoun holde.

Syr Lybeaus knyght certeys  
 Rod ynto the palys, 1760  
 And at the halle alyghte ;  
 Trompes, schalmuses,  
 He seygh be for the hyegh deys  
 Stonde yn hys syghte.  
 Amydde the halle flore  
 A fere stark and store  
 Was lyght and brende bryght,  
 Nere the dore he yede,  
 And ladde yn hys stede,  
 That wont was helpe hym yn fyght. 1770

Lybeaus inner gan pace,  
 To se ech a place,  
 The hales yn the halle,  
 Of mayne mor ne laffe  
 Ne sawe he body ne face  
 But menstrales yclodeth yn palle.

Wyth harp, fydele, and rote,  
 Orgenes, and mery note,  
     Well mery they maden alle;  
 Wyth sytole, and sawtrye,  
 So moch melodye  
     Was never wythinne walle. 1780

Before ech menstrale stod  
 A torche fayre and good,  
     Brennynge \* fayre and bryght;  
 Inner more he yode,†  
 To wyte wyth egre mode  
     Ho scholde wyth hym fyghte.  
 He yede ynto the corneres,  
 And lokede on the pylers,  
     That selcouth wer of syghte,  
 Of jasper, and of fyn crystall,  
 Swych was pylers and wall,  
     No ryche be ne myghte. 1790

The thores wer of bras,  
 The wyndowes wer of glas,  
     Florysseth wyth imagerye,  
 The halle ypaynted was,  
 No ryche never ther nas,  
     That he hadde seye wyth eye. 1800  
 He sette hym an that deys,  
 The menstrales wer yn pes,  
     That were go good and trye,  
 The torches that brende bryght  
 Quenchede anon ryght,  
     The menstrales wer aweye.

Dores and wyndowes alle  
 Beten yn the halle,  
     As hyt wer voys of thunder;  
 The stones of the walle  
 Over hym gon falle,  
     That thought hym mych wonther. 1810

---

\* Original reading : *Brenmyge*.

† Original reading : *Tede*.



That deys began to schake,  
 The erthe began to quake,  
     As he satte hym under;  
 The rof abone unlek,  
 And the faunsere ek,  
     As hyt wolde asonder.

As he sat thus dysmayde,  
 And held hymself betrayde, 1820  
     Stedes herde he naye.  
 Thanne was he bette ypayd,  
 And to hymself he sayd,  
     Yet y hope to playe.  
 He lokede ynto a feld,  
 Ther he sawe, wyth sper and scheld,  
     Come ryde knytes tweye;  
 Of purpur Inde armure  
 Was lyngell and trappure,  
     Wyth gold garlandys gay. 1830

That on rod ynto the halle,  
 And ther he gan to kalle,  
     Syr knyght aunterous,  
 Swych cas ther ys befalle,  
 Though thou be proud yn palle,  
     Fyghte thou most wyth us.  
 Queynte thou art of gynne,  
 Yf thou that lady wyne,  
     That ys so precyous.  
 Tho seyde Lybeaus, anon ryght, 1840  
 All fressch i am to fyght,  
     Thorough help of swete Jhesus.

Lybeaus wyth goodwyll  
 Into hys sadell gan skyll,  
     And a launce yn hond he hent;  
 Quyk he rod hem tyll,  
 In feld hys son to fell,  
     Therto was hys talent.  
 Togedere whan they mette  
 Upon har scheldes they sette 1850  
     Strokes of thoughty dent:





Mabounys schaft to-brast,  
 Tho was he sore agast,  
 And held hymself yschent.

And wyth that strok feloun  
 Lybeaus bar hym adoun  
 Over hys horses taylor,  
 For hys hynder arsoun  
 To-brak and fyll adoun  
 In that feld saunz fayle.  
 And neygh he hadde hym sclayn,  
 Wyth that come ryde Yrayn  
 Wyth helm, hauberke, and mayle,  
 All fressch he was to fyght,  
 He thought wyth mayn and myght  
 Syr Lybeaus for to asayle.

1860

Lybeaus of hym was war,  
 And sper to hym he bar,  
 And lette hys brother styлле ;  
 Swych dent he smot dar  
 That hys hauberke to-tar,  
 And that lykede Yrayn ylle.  
 Har launces they brak atwo,  
 Swerdes they through out tho,  
 Wyth herte grym and grylle,  
 And gonne for to fyghte,  
 Eyder prevede hys myghte  
 Other for to spylle.

1870

As they togedere hewe  
 Maboun the mare schrewe  
 In feld up aros ;  
 He sawe and well knew  
 That Yrayn smot dentys fewe,  
 Therefore hym grym agros.

1880

To Yrayn he ran ryght,  
 To helpe sle yn fyght  
 Lybeaus that was of noble los ;  
 But Lybeaus faught wyth hem bothe,  
 Though they wer never so wrothe,  
 And kepte hymself yn clos.

1890

Whan Yrayn saw Maboun,  
He smot a strok feloun

To syr Lybeaus wyth yre,  
Before [hys] forther arsoun  
Als sket he karf adoun

Of Lybeaus stede swyre.  
But Lybeaus was werroure slegh,  
And smot of hys theygh,

Fell, and bone, and lyre ;  
Tho halp hym naht hys armyes  
Hys chauntement, ne hys charmys, 1900  
Adoun fell that sory syre.

Lybeaus adoun lyght,  
Afote for to fyghte,

Maboun and he yn fere ;  
Swych strokes they gon dyghte,  
That sparkes sprong out bryght

From scheld and helmes clere.  
As they togedere sette,  
Har swerdes togedere mette, 1910

As ye may lythe and lere ;  
Maboun, that more schrewe,  
To-karf that sworde of Lybeawe,  
A twynne quyt and skere.

Lybeaus was sore aschamed,  
An yn hys herte agramede,

For he hadde ylore hys sworde ;  
And hys stede was lamed,  
And he schulde be defamed,

To Artour kyng, hys lord. 1920  
To Yrayn tho he ran,  
Hys sword he drough out than,

Was scharp of egge, and ord ;  
To Maboun he ran ryght,  
Well faste he gan to fyght,  
Of love ther nas no word.

But ever faught Maboun,  
As a wod lyoun,  
Lybeaus for the flo ;



But Lybeaus karf adoun  
Hys scheld wyth hys fachoun,  
That he tok Yrayn fro.  
Wythout more tale teld,  
The left arm wyth the scheld  
Well evene he smot of tho ;  
Tho spak Maboun hym tylle,  
Of thyne dentys ylle,  
Gentyll knyght, now ho.

1930

And i woll yelde me,  
In trewthe and lewtè,  
At thyn owene wyllè ;  
And that lady fre,  
That ys yn my poustè,  
I wyll the take tylle.  
For thorough that swordes dent  
Myn hond y have yschent,  
That femyn wyll me spyllè ;  
I femynede hem bothe,  
Sertayn wythoute nothe,  
In feld our fon to fylle.

1940

1950

Seyde Lybeaus, Be my thryste,  
I nell naht of thy yefte,  
All thys world to wynne ;  
But ley on strokes swyfte,  
Our on schall other lyste  
That hedde of be the skynne.  
Maboun and Lybeaus  
Faste togedere hewes,  
And stente for no synne ;  
Lybeaus was more of myght,  
And karf hys helm bryght,  
And hys hedde atwynne.

1960

Tho Maboun was ysclayn,  
He ran ther he lefte Yrayn,  
Wyth fachoun yn hys fest ;  
For to cleve hys brayn,  
Therof he was certayn,  
And trewly was hys tryst.



And whanne he com thore,  
 Away he was ybore, 1970  
     Whyderward he nyste ;  
 He softe hym for the nones,  
 Wyde yn alle the wones,  
     To fyghte more hym lyste.

And whanne he ne fond hym noght,  
 He held hymself be caught,  
     And gan to syke sare,  
 And seyde yn word and thought  
 Thys wyll be sore about  
     That he ys thus fram me yfare. 1980  
 On kne hym sette that gentyll knyght  
 And prayde to Marie bryght,  
     Kevere hym of hys care ;  
 As he prayde thus yn halle  
 Out of the ston walle  
     A wyndow doun fyll thare ;

And a greet wonder wythall  
 In hys herte gan fall,  
     As he sat and beheld ;  
 A warm come out a pace, 1990  
 Wyth a womannes face,  
     Was yong and nothyng eld.  
 Hyr body and hyr wyngys  
 Schynede yn all thynges,  
     As gold gaylyche ygyld were,  
 Her tayle was myche unmete,  
 Hyr pawes grymly grete,  
     As ye may lythe and lere.\*

Lybeaus began to swete,  
 Ther he satte yn hys sete, 2000  
     Maad as he were,  
 So sore hym gan agryse,  
 That he ne myghte aryse,  
     Thaugh hyt hadde bene all afere.†

\* This is the only stanza in which the poet has neglected the recurrent rhymes ;  
 in other respects it appears to be perfect.

† Conjectural emendation : *a fere*.

And er Lybeaus hyt wyste  
 The warm wyth mouth hym kyste,  
     All aboute hys swyre ;  
 And after that kyssinge  
 The warmys tayle and wynges  
     Anon hyt fell fro hyre.

2010

So fayr yn all thyng  
 Woman wythout lesyng  
     Ne saw he never er tho,  
 But sche stod before hym naked,  
 And all her body quaked,  
     Therefore was Lybeaus wo.  
 Sche seyde, Knyght gentyle,  
 God yelde the dy whyle,  
     That my son thou woldest slo ?  
 Thou hast yslawe nouthe  
     Two clerkes kouthes,  
     To deeth they wold me have ydo.

2020

Be est, north, and sowthe,  
 Be wordes of har mouthe,  
     Well many man kouth they schend ;  
 Wyth hare chauntement,  
 To warm me hadde they ywent,  
     In wo to welde and wende.  
 Tyll y hadde kyste Gaweyn,  
 Eyther som other knyght sertayn,  
     That wer of hys kende ;  
 And for thou savyst my lyf,  
 Casteles ten and fyf  
     I yeve the wythouten ende :

2030

And y to be thy wyf,  
 Ay wythouten stryf,  
     Yyf hyt ys Artours wylle.  
 Lybeaus was glad and blythe,  
 And lepte to horse swythe,  
     And lefte that ladye styлле.  
 But ever he dradde Yrayn,  
 For he was naght yslayn,  
     Wyth speche he wold hym spylle ;

2040



To the castell gate he rode,  
 And hoveðe and abod,  
 To Jhesu he bad wyth good wylle.

Sende hym tydyngys glad,  
 Of ham that long hadde  
 That lady do vylanye ;  
 Lybeaus Lambard tolde, 2050  
 And othre knyghtes bolde,  
 How hym there gan agye ;  
 And how Maboun was yslayn,  
 And wondede was Yrayn,  
 Thorough grace of seynt Marie ;  
 And how that lady bryght  
 To a warm was dyght,  
 Thorough kraft of chaunterye.

And how thurgh kus of a knyght  
 Woman sche was aplyght, 2060  
 And a semyly creature ;  
 But sche stod me before,  
 Naked as sche was ybore,  
 And seyde, now y am sure  
 My fomen beth yslayn,  
 Maboun and Yrayn,  
 In pes now may we dure.  
 Whan syr Lybeaus, knyght of prys,  
 Hadde ytolde the styward, y wys,  
 All thys aventure, 2070

A robe of purpure bys,  
 Ypelvryd wyth puryd grys,  
 Anon he lette forth brynge ;  
 Calles and keverchefs ryche  
 He sent her pryvylyche,  
 Anon wythout dwellynge ;  
 And whan sche was redy dyght,  
 Sche rod with mayn and myght,  
 And wyth her another kyng ;  
 And all the peple of the toune, 2080  
 Wyth a fayr processyoun,  
 Thyder they gonne thrynge.



Whan the lady was come to towne,  
 Of gold and ryche stones a krowne,  
     Upon her hedde was sette ;  
 And weren glad and blythe,  
 And thonkede god fele syde,  
     That her bales bette.  
 All the lordes of dignytè,  
 Dedede her omage and feawtè,  
     As hyt was due dette ;  
 Thus Lybeaus, wys and wyght,  
 Wan that ylke lady bryght,  
     Out of the develes nette.

2090

Sevè nyght they made sojour,  
 Wyth Lambard yn the tour,  
     And all the peple yn same ;  
 And tho wente they wyth honour  
 To the noble kyng Artour,  
     Wyth moche gle and game :  
 And thonkede godes myghtes,  
 Artour and hys knyghtes,  
     That he ne hadde no schame ;  
 Artour yaf her also blyve  
 Lybeaus to be hys wyfe,  
     That was so gentyll a dame.

2100

The joy of that bredale  
 Nys not told yn tale,  
     Ne rekened yn no gest ;  
 Barons and lordynges fale  
 Come to that semyly sale,  
     And ladyes well honeste.  
 Ther was ryche servyse,  
 Of all that men kouth devyse,  
     To lest and ek to mest ;  
 The menstrales, yn bour and halle,  
 Hadde ryche yftes wythalle,  
     And they that weryn unwrest.

2110

Fourty dayes they dwellde,\*  
And har feste helde,  
    Wyth Artour the kyng ;  
As the Frensch tale teld,  
Artour, wyth knyghtes beld,  
    At hom gan hem brynge.  
Fele yer they levede yn same,  
Wyth moche gle and game,  
    Lybeaus and that swete thyng.  
Jhesu Cryst our savyour,  
And hys moder, that swete flour,  
    Graunte us alle good endyng.

2120

2130

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\* Original reading : *dwellde*.





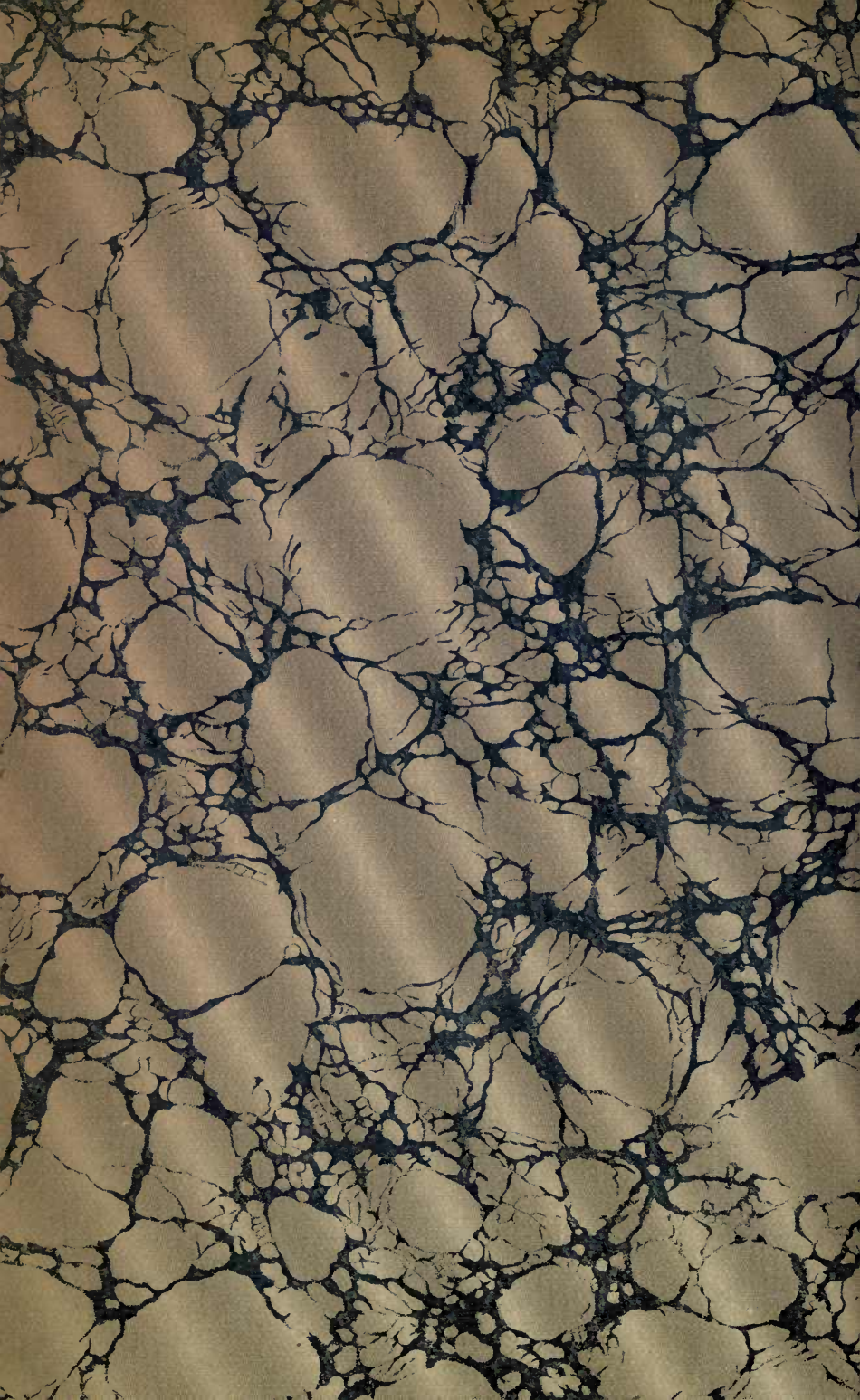














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